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Now or *Never*.

The *Holy*, *Serious*, *Diligent* Believer Justified, Encouraged, Excited and Directed: And the *Opposers* and *Neglecters* convinced by the light of Scripture and Reason.

By *Richard Baxter*.

To be Communicated, by such as want ability or opportunity themselves to plead the Cause of *Serious Holiness* for others Conviction.

Luk. 7. 35. *But wisdom is justified of all her children.*

Nihil ita ad defendendam Puritate *utile, nihil ad detegendam* Veritate *fortius.* Ambros.

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THE

THE PREFACE.

IT is a question more boldly than accurately debated by many [*Whether a man may not be saved in any Religion that is faithful to the principles of it by serious diligent practice?*] The true Solution is this: *Religion* is that which men hold and do to serve and please God. 1. If men make themselves a Religion of serving Idols or Devils instead of God. 2. Or if they place their service to God himself in things that are evil (as what evil is there that some men have not brought into their Religion, and fathered upon God?) the more diligent

gent such men are in their Religion, the more they sin. 3. Or if they make themselves a Religion of irrational ludicrous ceremonies, their greatest diligence in this will not save them. 4. Or if they hold all the Essentials of the True Religion, except some one, it cannot save them while *one* thing is wanting which is *Essential* to that Religion, and so necessary to salvation (which is the case of real Hereticks:) For they are not indeed of *that Religion*, if they want that which is Essential to it. 5. Or if they hold all that is *Essential* to the *true Religion* only *Notionally*, and hold any thing with it *practically*, which is contradictory and inconsistent with it, the sonndness of their *Notional belief* will not save them from the mortal poyson of their *Practical* Heresie or Errour.

But 2. Whosoever holdeth all [illegible] to salvation, and

s *ſerious* and *diligent* in living ac-
ording thereunto, ſhall be ſaved,
whatever error he holdeth with it.
For if he be *ſerious* and *diligent* in
he Practice of all things *Neceſſary*
o ſalvation, he *hath* all that *is ne-*
ceſſary to ſalvation; *viz.* in *Belief*
and *Practice*: And it muſt needs
follow, that his *Errours* are either
not contradictory to the things
Neceſſary which he holdeth and
practiſeth, or that he holdeth not
thoſe *Errours Practically*, but *Na-*
tionally, as an Opinion, or unefec-
tual Cogitaiton in a dream, which
provoketh not to action; And in
ſuch a caſe the errour keepeth no
man from ſalvation.

What is neceſſary to be believed
by them that never hear the Gof-
pel, it ſo little concerneth us to
know, that God hath not thought
meet to make it ſo plain to us, as
things that more concern our
ſelves. But as it is certain, that

out the Attonement, Satisfaction, and Reconciliation made by Christ, and without new termes of Grace to be judged by, and without his Grace for the performance of their part, no man can be saved (that hath the use of reason;) so there is so much knowledge necessary to salvation, as is necessary [to engage the heart to love God above all, and sincerely to obey his revealed will, and to prefer the life to come before the transitory pleasures of this life.] Now if any man can prove to me, that those that never heard the Gospel, can thus love God, and the life to come, and obey sincerely, without the knowledge of the person, life, death, resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the Declaration of the attractive Love and Goodness of God in him, and in the work of our Redemption, then I should believe that such Negative Infidels may be saved: For

God

God cannot damn a ſanctified ſoul that ſincerely loveth him. But if the diſcovery of the Love of God in our Redemption be ſo neceſſary a moral means to engage the heart (now corrupted by ſin and creature-love) to the true Love of God, that this Love cannot be wrought without it, or if Chriſt give not his *Spirit* to produce the Love of God in any but thoſe that hear the Goſpel, and believe in him, then no ſuch perſons can be ſaved by their Religion. For Chriſt is the way to the Father, and no man cometh to the Father but by him, and the Love of God is abſolutely and of it ſelf neceſſary to ſalvation, and Faith in Chriſt is ſo far neceſſary to ſalvation, as it is neceſſary to bring men to the Love of God, as pardoning ſin and reconciled to them.

But if any ſhould never ſo confidently conclude, that ſome that

hear

hear not of Christ may be saved, yet he must needs confess that the want of this clear and great discovery of the Love and goodness of God, in his pardoning grace, and of the glorious life which he hath prepared for us, must needs make the Love of God a very rare and difficult thing, and consequently their salvation rare and difficult, in comparison of ours.

The Christian Faith, is [*The believing an everlasting life of happiness to be given by God (with the pardon of all sin) as procured by the sufferings & merits of Jesus Christ, to all that are sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and do persevere in love to God, and to each other, and in a holy and heavenly conversation.*] This is saving Faith and Christianity, if we *Consent* as well as *Assent*. All that was *necessary* to *salvation* to be believed, was formerly thought to be contained in the *Creed*, and that

was

was the test or symbol of the Christian Faith; and Christian Religion is the same, and hath the same rule, and test, and symbol in all ages. But since Faction and Tyranny, Pride and covetousness became the masters of the Religion of too many, *vice* and *selfish interest* hath commanded them to change the Rule of Faith by their additions, and to make so much *necessary to salvation*, as is *necessary* to their affected Universal Dominion, and to their Commodity and carnal ends. And since Faction entered, and hath torn the Church into many Sects (the Greek, the Roman, the Armenian, the Jacobites, the Abassine, and many more) it seemeth meet to the more tyrannical Sect to call these *several Religions*, and to say that every man that differeth from them in any of their opinions or additions, which they please to call Articles of Faith, is of another Religion. And

* *And yet when they have divided the Church, & damned the greatest part of christians, and raged with fire and sword against their brethren, they confess themselves that it is no point of faith at all, that it is of* Divine right *that the Bishop of* Rome *is St.* Peters *Successor, and not only of humane right. And must the church be divided, and must the damned for not believing or submitting to a humane Ordinance? If we be of many Religions, is not Popery then a humane Religion? The very words of* Smith *Bishop of* Calcedon, *the chiefest of the English Popish Clergy, are these. Survey c. 5. "To us it sufficeth that the Bishop of* Rome *is St.* Peters *Successor, and this all the Fathers testifie, and all the Catholick Church believeth; but whether it be jure divino, or humano, is no point of faith.] And how do their Laicks here know what is a point of faith, but by the testimony of their Priests?*

* And if the word *Religion* be taken in this sense, and if all that agree in *One Christian religion*, are said to be of as many *Religions* as different opinions, in points that some call *necessary*, then I answer the Quest. thus. He is the true

true Catholick Christian that hath but *One*, even the *Christian Religion*: And this is the case of the *Protestants*, who casting off the additions of Popery, adhere to the Primitive simplicity and unity: If Papists, or any others, corrupt this Religion with humane additions and innovations, the great danger of these Corruptions, is, lest they draw them from the sound belief and *serious Practice* of that ancient Christianity which we are all agreed in. And (among Papists, or any other Sect) where their corruptions do not thus corrupt their *Faith* and *Practice* in the true *Essentials*, it is certain that those corruptions shall not damn them. For he that truly believeth all things that are essential to Christianity, and liveth accordingly with *sincere diligence*, hath the promise of Salvation. And it is certain, that what errour that man holdeth, in

is either not inconsistent with true Christianity, or not *practically*, but *notionally* held, and so not inconsistent as held by him: For how can that be *inconsistent* which *actually doth consist with it?*

If a Papist or any other Sectary do seriously Love God, and his brother, and set his heart upon the Life to come, and give up himself to the merits and grace of Jesus Christ, and the sanctification of the holy Spirit, to be fitted for that Glory, and liveth by faith above the world, and mortifyeth the desires of the flesh, and liveth wilfully in no known sin, but presseth after further degrees of holiness, I doubt not of the salvation of that person: No more then of the Life of him that hath taken poison but into his mouth and spit it out again, or let down so little as nature and antidotes do expel: But I will not therefore *plead for poyson*, nor *take it*, because

cause men *may live* that thus take it.

Having answered this great Question, Reader, I am now come up to the subject of my following discourse, & to tell thee that though it be a great question whether *serious diligence* in a corrupt Religion will save a man, it is past all question, and agreed on by all sides, that no Religion will save a man, that is not *serious*, *sincere*, and *diligent* in it. If thou be of the *truest Religion* in the world, and art not true thy self to that *Religion*, the *Religion* is good, but it is none of *thine*. *Objectively* thou art of a true and good Religion; the things in themselves are *true* and good; but *subjectively* thou art sincerely of *no Religion* at all: for if thou art not *serious*, *sincere*, and *diligent* in it, it is certain that thou dost not *truly* entertain it, & make it thine, but it is thy *Book* that have the true *Religion*, or thy *tongue*, or

fare

fantasie, or *brain*, but not thy *heart*: And the best meat on *thy table*, or that goeth no further then *thy mouth*, will never feed thee, or preserve thy life. So certain is the salvation of every holy mortified Christian, and so certain the damnation of every *ungodly*, worldly, fleshly sensualist, that I had a thousand fold rather have my soul in the case of a godly *Anabaptist*, yea or a Monk, or Fryar among the Papists that liveth a truly heavenly life, in the love of God and man, and in a *serious diligent* obedience to God according to his knowledge, then in the case of a Protestant, or whomsoever you can imagine to be rightest in his opinions, that is *worldly*, and *sensual*, and a stranger (if not an enemy) to the *power* and *serious practice* of his own profest *Religion*, and void of a Holy and Heavenly heart and life. If ever *such* a man be saved, the principles of *all* Religion do deceive us. And

And certainly such mens *hypocrisie* doth aggravate their sin, and will increase their misery. So many as there be in the world, that profess themselves *Christians*, and yet are not *serious* and *diligent* in their Religion, but are ungodly neglecters or enemies of a holy life, so many *Hypocrites* are in the world. And I wonder that their *consciences* call them not *hypocrites*, when they stand up at the Creed, or profess themselves Believers: though the Congregation seeth not [*hypocrite*] written in their *foreheads*, *God* seeth it written on their *hearts*, and those that converse with them may see it written in their *lives*. And yet these men are the forwardest to cry out against *Hypocrites*: The Devil hath taught it them to stop the *suspition* and the *exhsfe* of conscience, as he hath taught the *greatest Schismaticks* or Church-dividers (the Papists) to cry out most against *Schism*

and

and diviſion, and pretend to *unity*. But theſe ſhifts do blind none but fools and forſaken conſciences, and the cheat that is now detected by the wiſe, will quickly by God be detected before all the world. Till then let them make merry in their deceits: who would envy the drunkard the pleaſure of an hours ſwiniſh ſick delight? This is *their portion*, and this is *their time*: As *we* have choſen and covenanted for *another portion*, we are content to ſtay the *time* aſſigned, till God ſhall tell them and all the world, who was *ſincere*, and who the *hypocrite*. For our parts, we believe that he is *moſt* or *leaſt ſincere*, that is *moſt* or *leaſt ſerious* in the *practice* of his own profeſt Religion.

For my part, I muſt profeſs that (by the mercy of God) I have made it the work of many a year, to look about me, and think wherein the felicity of man doth indeed conſiſt:

And

And I have long been past doubt (as much as I am that I am a man) that it is not in transitory sensual delights, and that these are such lean and dry commodies, and pitifull pleasures, leaving men so speedily in a forlorn state, that I am contented that my greatest enemy have my part of them. I have renounced them to God (as any part of my felicity) and I renounce them to men: Let them do with me about these things as God will give them leave. I will have a portion after death, or He have none.

And the case is so palpable, that it is my admiration that the contrary deceit is consistent with the nature and reason of a man, and that so many Gentlemen and Scholars and persons of an ingenuous education, can no better distinguish, and can possibly conquer their reason so easily with the presence of sensual delights, and so

easily

easily make nothing of that which *will be to morrow* and *for ever*, meerly because *it is not to day*. Well! I must say, the wisdom and Justice of God is abundantly seen in the Government of the world, with the Liberty of the will, and determining that *all men should speed as they choose*.

But may be the Reader will say, he expected that instead of writing such popular discourses, I should have *vindicated my self* against the accusations, that in multitudes of Libels and Pamphlets are scattered abroad against me. But doth he think that my main is *seelonsly a Christian* that is not more zealous for God and *Religion*, and the *Souls of men* then for *himself*? I have I nothing else to do with my *time* and *labour*, but plead a cause of *my own*, which *God* will so *speedily* and *effectually* plead? Will it not be *time enough* to be justified at the Bar and day of

God?

God? I am content that they carry it as they desire till then (were it not more for their own and others mens sakes then mine.) Am I like to *forsake* my *life and all* for Christ, and endure torments if I were called to it, if I cannot endure to be reviled and slandered by passionate men? Was it for nothing that our *Lord* would *not answer for himself* when he was accused before *Pilate*? Shall *they* be able to *calumniate* under the threatenings of the revenge of Heaven? and shall *I* not be able to be *silent* under such a promise, as *Matth.* 5. 10, 11, 12. *The servant of the Lord must not strive!* Our Lord gave us an example of *not reviling* again, when he *was reviled*: *He made himself of no reputation, but endured the curse and contradiction of sinners, despising the shame.* I confess I think when Gods *interest*, and the *good of others* doth require it, a man should

not be wanting to his *own defence*, and I have long ago *written* that which will satisfie the impartial: But when I saw that it is like to tend to *heats*, and set *more on work*, I had rather let men call me all the names they can devise, and voluminously accuse me of any thing that malice shall suggest, then do any thing to *foment contentions* in the Church. But if God convince me that it is *my duty* to detect the *falsehoods* of men, it is a work soon done.

But what good will it do the world for me to open the *numerous mistakes* that other men have published, or to confute every Scripe, when all that I converse with are *satisfied already*, and believe not the reproachers; and all the evidence in the world will not satisfie those that *will not read it*, or are resolved by their *malice* or *interest* never to be satisfied?

For my part, I doubt not but God and their Consciences will give them such a Confutation as shall be sufficient to them and me to end the Controversie.

My work is to plead the Cause of God and holiness against the profane and sensual world, and no further to plead any Cause of my own, then is necessary to that. If I *must* bear the effects of mens displeasure, I had an hundred times rather it were for pleading for *Holiness*, and *Love*, and *Peace*, and *Concord*, against impiety, uncharitableness, and divisions, then for *defending my self*, or upon the account of *Ceremonies* or *smaller matters*. And if for *these* I bear it, I doubt not of more comfort at the present, much less do I doubt of a better *issue* then false accusers can expect. We shall be shortly upon even ground: The time is short: The pleasures of sin, the

triumphs of malice, the sufferings of innocencie are but for a moment. I envy them not so short and dark a day: The judge is at the door that will judge all again, and set all strait, and judge in righteousnes. When I am afraid of leaving a noisom and unrighteous world, and ending all my pain and trouble, and being beyond the reach of malice, then I will fear what man can do. Let them keep me out of heaven, or deprive me of my peace and comfort if they can: If *they* fear not the *threatenings of God* against the malicious and unjust, surely I have less reason to *fear their threatenings*. When they have done their *worst to others*, let them *save themselves* from death if they can: I am devoted to God, and I never yet found cause to repent it: I am resolved to use the *utmost of my power* for the interest of *Holiness*, *Charity* and *Peace*, and for

for *Loyalty to the King*, & *obedience* or *patient submission* to superiors: And if yet I bear the fruits of fury, let those that insult over sufferers, as if they were therefore guilty or miserable, remember that we *could* have avoided it if we *would*, and could have found the way of applause and prosperity as well as they; and that no man *takes* that for his *misery* which he *chooseth*. If this *kind of preaching* or *writing* offend, could not I have *avoided* it? I am not in *love* with sufferings from men, nor will I escape them at the rates of Gods displeasure. I never think my self in the *highest form* of Christians, till I am more *conform* to the *sufferings of Christ*, and have endured more then yet I have.

It is the Christians old Apology in *Tertullian*: [*Quasi non totum quod in nos potestis nostrum sit Arbitrium! Certe si velim Christianus*

ſum : tunc ergo me damnabis, ſi damnari velim : Quum vero quod in me potes, niſi velim non potes, jam meæ voluntatis eſt quod potes, non tuæ poteſtatis : Proinde & vulgus vane de noſtra vexatione gaudet. Proinde & noſtrum eſt gaudium quod ſibi vendicant, qui malumus damnari quam à Deo excidere. Contra, illi qui nos oderunt, dolere non gaudere debebant, conſecutis nobis quod eligimus.] *Tert. Apologet. cap. 39.*

That is "As if all that you can do "againſt us were not our own "choice! (or will) Certainly it is "becauſe *I will* that I am a Chri-"ſtian; therefore if *I will* be con-"demned, then thou wilt condemn "me. And when that which thou "canſt do againſt me, thou canſt "not do, unleſs *I will*, it is not "now from thy *power* that thou "canſt do it, but from *my will*: "And therefore the vulgar do in "vain *rejoyce* at our vexation. And

"there-

" therefore it is *our joy*, which they " challenge to themselves, while " we had *rather* be condemned then " fall from God. On the contrary, " they that hate us, should grieve " and not rejoyce, while we attain " but what we *choose*.]

For my part, if the world will needs be mad, I think both the *laughing* and the *weeping* Philosopher are more excusable then he that would be *over-angry* at them, or *over-busie* in disputing with them, saith *Senca* [*Quare fera agri rabiem & phrenetici verba nempe quia videntur nescire quid faciunt. Quid interest quo quisque vitio suos imprudens? Sen. de Ira. l. 3. c. 26. Anger* and *phrensie* are but several ways of a mans losing his wit; and therefore he that can bear with *one*, should somewhat bear with the other. (Though indeed *voluntariness*, or involuntariness maketh a great difference.) It is not worth a

 man

mans time and labour and cost to be over solicitous in his own vindication, let the world say of him what they please. [*Multum tempo-ris ultio absumit: Multis se injuriis objecit, dum unam dolet. Diutius irascimur omnes quam laedimur.*] *Sen. de. Ira. l.* 3 *c*, 27. "Revenge "takes up a deal of time: He that "complaineth of one injurie, ob-"jects himself to many. We are "all angry longer then we are hurt.

I have truly given you now the Reasons, why I rather choose to speak these common necessary things, against the Devils party, the ungodly, the enemies, or neglecters of *serious Holiness*, (agreeable to the subject of his Majesties Christian and excellent Declaration against Debauchery at his entrance upon his Royal Government) then to meddle with any of the contending parties of these times (who are so

so angry because in obedience to authority I once endeavoured to reconcile them) or to be unseasonable in pleading any cause that is my own. And now referring the Reader to this short Discourse, I must first desire that he misunderstand me not in one or two passages. 1. That my citation of the *passage in the Homilies*, be not taken as if I spoke a word against it, though I say, I dare not my self subscribe it. For though I think my self, that seeing a *persecutor like Saul* may *repent*, and be *pardoned*, a *mocker at Godliness* may Repent and be *forgiven also*: Yet I am resolved still to suspect my own understanding, rather then to *speak against the doctrine of the Church*.

2. Think it not strange that I reprehend even Ministers that are secret, or open opposers of a holy diligence; For our forefathers Homily telleth us, as followeth: How, for

Inform; &c. part. 2. p. 150, 151. [Examples of such scorners, we read in 2 *Chron.* " When the good King " *Hezekiah* in the beginning of his " Reign had destroyed Idolatrie, " purged the Temple, and Reformed Religion in his Realm, he sent " Messengers into every City to gather the people to *Jerusalem* to " solemnize the feast of *Easter* in " such sort as God had appointed. " The Posts went from City to " City. — And what did the people " think ye? Did they laud and " praise the name of the Lord that " had given them so good a King, " so zealous a Prince to abolish Idolatry, and to restore again " Gods true Religion? No, no; " the Scripture saith, the people " laughed them to scorn, and " mocked the Kings Messengers. " And in the last Chapter of the " same Book it is written, that Almighty God having compassion

on

" on his people, sent his Messen-
" gers the prophets to them, to
" call them from their abominable
" idolatry and wicked kind of li-
" ving: But they mocked his Mes-
" sengers, they despised his words,
" and misused his prophets, untill
" the wrath of the Lord arose
" against his people, and till there
" was no remedie.] —— The wick-
" ed people that were in the days
" of *Noah* made but a mock at the
" word of God, when *Noah* told
" them that God would take ven-
" geance on them for their sins. ——
" *Lot* preached to the *Sodomites*,
" that except they repented, both
" they and their City should be
" destroyed; They thought his say-
" ings impossible to be true, they
" scorned and mocked his admoni-
" tions, and reputed him as an old
" doting fool: But God —— burnt
" up those scorners and mockers of
" his holy Word. And what esti-

mation

"mation had Christs doctrine "among the Scribes and Phariſees? "What reward had he among "them? —— The Phariſees which "were covetous, did ſcorn him in "his Doctrine. O then ye ſee that "worldly rich men do ſcorn the "Doctrine of their ſalvation; the "worldly wiſe men ſcorn the Do-"ctrine of Chriſt as fooliſhneſs to "their underſtandings: Theſe "ſcorners have ever been and ever "ſhall be to the worlds end. For "St. *Peter* propheſied, that ſuch "ſcorners ſhould be in the end be-"fore the latter day. Take heed "therefore my brethren, take heed: "be ye not ſcorners of Gods moſt "holy word, provoke him not to "poure out his wrath upon you, as "he did upon thoſe Gibers and "Mockers: Be not wilfull mur-"derers of your own ſouls.] Thus far the Homily.

And no marvel if Priests may be

be guilty as well as people, if it be true that is said by the Church in Homil. 3. p. against Peril of Idolatry, pag. 56, 57. [" But a true " Preacher to stay this mischief, is in " very many places scarcely heard " once in the whole year, and " somewhere not once in seven " year, as is evident to be proved. " Further it appeareth not by any " story of credit, that true and " sincere preaching hath endured " in any one place above an hun- " dred years] But it is evident that " Images, superstition, and wor- " shipping of Images, and idolatry " have continued many hundred " years —— For Preaching of Gods " word (most sincere in the begin- " ing) by process of time waxed " less and less pure, and after cor- " rupt, and last of all altogether " laid down and left off, and other " inventions of men crept in place " of it. —— So that Laity & Cler-

" gy, learned and unlearned, all
" ages, sects, and degrees of men,
" women, and children of whole
" Christendome (a most horrible
" & most dreadful thing to think)
" have been at once drowned in
" abominable idolatry, of all other
" vices most detested of God, and
" most damnable to man, & that by
" the space of eight hundred years.]
So far the Church of *England*.

And though I am far from crediting the many fabulous stories in that and such other Books, yet I shall recite one instance in the life of *Philip Nerius*, the Father of the Oratorians, which shall shew you, that even among the Papists, *holy serious diligence* where it is, hath the same usage from the prophane both Clergy and Laity, as in other places, and so that everywhere *Holiness* is persecuted by men professing the same Religion with those they persecute.

The

The meetings of the Oratorians and their exercises, so like those now abhorr'd by many, are by *Baronius* (that was one of them) thus described, as you may see in the life of *Nerius*, p. 45.

"Certainly by the Divine wisdom was it brought to pass, that "in our times——Assemblies "were instituted in the City, "much what after the form of those "Apostolical Conventions; such "especially as by the Apostle were "appointed for discoursing of Divine matters, both for edifying "the hearers, and for propagating the Church.——It was a-"greed, that the *zealous Christians* should meet a dayes at St. "*Hieromes* Oratory, and there a "religious meeting should be held "after this manner. First, silence "being made, they began with "prayer, and one of the brothers "reads some pious lesson. At the

reading

"reading of which, the Father u-
"sed to interpose upon occasion,
"explaining more fully, enlarging
"and vehemently inculcating
"on the minds of the auditors
"the things read, continuing his
"discourse sometimes a whole h[illegible]
"(to the great satisfaction of the
"hearers) dialogue-wise, asking
"some of the company their opi-
"nions of such a thing. After-
"ward, by his appointment, one
"of them went up into the desk,
"raised upon steps, and made an
"Oration, without flourishes, or
"varnish of Language, composed
"out of the approved and choise
"lives of Saints, sacred Writ, and
"sentences of holy Fathers. He
"that succeeded him, discoursed
"after the same manner, but on a
"differing matter. Then followed
"the third, who related some part
"of the Church-story in the order
"of its several ages. Every of

"these

" these had his half-hour allotted
" him, and performed all with mar-
" vellous delight and approbation:
" Then singing some Hymn, and
" going to prayers again, the com-
" pany broke up. All things thus
" ordered, and ratified by the
" Pope, as far as the times would
" suffer the beautiful face of the
" the Primitive Apostolical assem-
" bling, seemed to be revived a-
" gain; whereat all good men re-
" joycing, and many taking their
" Model from them, the like exer-
" cises of piety were set up and
" practised in other places.] So far
Baronius.

If any say that this long and zea-
lous exercise was not in private
houses; I answer, Allow us an O-
ratory, as the Pope himself allow-
ed them, and we had rather far be
there then in private houses: But
if any that hinder such from being
publick, shall then reproach it for
being

being in a leſs publick place, they ſcarce play fair. The Church of *England*, in the third part of the Serm. againſt peril of Idolatry, p. 66, 67. ſaith, " In *Maximinian* " and *Conſtantius* the Emperours " Proclamation, the places where " Chriſtians reſorted to publick " Prayer, were called Conventi- " cles.] See further.

But how were the Oratorians eſteemed and uſed? In Chap. 16. of *Nerius*'s perſecutions, after the mention of mens rancour and railing that maligned him, it follows, page 56. that " The Pre- " late that was Deputy of the " City, moved by the reports " of them that bore a ſpleen to " *Philip*, ſent for him, and repre- hended him ſharply: " Is it not a " ſhame (ſaith he) that you who " profeſs a contempt of the world, " ſhould hunt for popular applauſe, " and walk through the City guard-

" ed

"ed with troops, with such nets "as these fishing for Church- "preferments?] When having "shrewdly taunted him with such "like expressions, he prohibits him "the hearing of Confessions for "15. dayes, and to use the customs "of the Oratory, but by leave "first obtained, or to lead about "with him any companies of men, "threatning imprisonment upon "his disobedience: Neither would "he let him depart till he put in "security for his appearance, say- "ing——Come, you do all this, "not for the glory of God, but to "make a party for your self.—— "Mean time, while the good man "was commending himself to God, "having intreated divers religious "persons to be instant in Prayer "about this business, one appear- "eth, and saith—[This trouble "shall be quickly over, and the "work that is begun be more

"strongly

being in a leſs publick place, they ſcarce play fair. The Church of *England*, in the third part of the Serm. againſt peril of Idolatry, p. 66, 67. ſaith, " In *Maximinian* " and *Conſtantius* the Emperours " Proclamation, the places where " Chriſtians reſorted to publick " Prayer, were called Conventi- " cles.] See further.

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"Mean time, while the good man
"was commending himself to God,
"having intreated divers religious
"persons to be instant in Prayer
"about this business, one appear-
"eth, and saith—[This trouble
"shall be quickly over, and the
"work that is begun be more
"strongly

"strongly confirmed, they who "resist now, shall assist hereafter; "and if any one shall dare to "oppose it any longer, God shall "speedily avenge it on him; the "Prelate, that is your chiefest "adversary, shall certainly die "within 15. dayes.]——And it "fell out precisely as he foretold: "For the Prelate (the Popes De-"puty) relating the proceedings "to his Holiness somewhat par-"tially, died suddenly.——No "sooner was this blaze of perse-"cution out, but a much fiercer "was kindled against the Order: "For under pretext of Piety and "Religion, some possessed the "Pope that the Preachers of St. "*Hieroms* many times delivered "things ridiculous and unsound, "which argued high indiscretion "or ignorance, and must needs "endanger their hearers.——]

I would

I would not have troubled you with any of these citations, but to let those know that are offended at my reproof of impious Ministers, that in all places and parties in the world where there is any *serious diligence* for salvation, there are alwayes enemies of the same Profession, even among the Clergy as well as others. The hindering of *Holy Diligence* and *Seriousness*, is the work of the Devil and his Instruments in the world. The promoting it is the work of Christ, and of his servants. The great actions of the world are but the conflictings of these two armies, the salvation of the Conquerours, and the damnation of the conquered being the end. By this contending for *Faith and Holiness*, and bearing the *Cross*, I take my self bound to perform my Covenant

of

of [professing the Faith of Christ crucified, and manfully fighting under his Banner against the Devil, the World, and the Flesh, to my lives end.] Reader, thou art engaged to the like as well as I, and shalt be judged accordingly, and reap as thou hast sowed. *CHOOSE* and *DO* as thou wilt *SPEED.*

Eccles. 9. 10.

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest.

He *mortality of* being the principal subject of *Solomon* in this Chapter, and observing that wisdom and piety exempt not men from death, he first hence infers, that *God's love or hatred* to one man above another, is not to be gathered by his deal-

ing with them here, where *all things* in the common course of providence *do come alike to all*. The *common sin* hath introduced *death* as a *common punishment*, which levelleth all, and endeth all the *contrivances*, business, and enjoyments of this life, to good and bad; and the discriminating Justice is not *ordinarily* manifested here: An *Epicure* or *Infidel* would think *Solomon* were here pleading *that* unmanly impious cause: But it is not the *cessation* of the life, or *operations*, or *enjoyments* of the *soul* that he is speaking of, as if there were no life to come, or the soul of man were not immortal: But it is the *cessation* of all the *actions*, and *honours*, and *pleasures* of *this life*, which to

to good or bad shall be no more. *Here* they have no more reward, the memory of them will be *here* forgotten: *They have no more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the Sun*, vers. 5, 6.

From hence he further *inferreth*, that the comforts of life are but short and transitory, and therefore that what the creature can afford, must be presently taken: And as the wicked shall have no more but present pleasures, so the faithful may take their lawful comforts in the present moderate use of creatures: For if their *dutiful* goodness be of right and title to any, it is to them: And therefore, though they may not abuse them to their hurt, to the pam-

pering of their flesh, and strengthening their lusts, and hindering spiritual duties, benefits, and salvation; yet must they *serve the Lord with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things*, which he giveth them, *Deut.* 28.47.

Next he inferreth from the brevity of mans life, the *Necessity of speed*, and *Diligence in his duty*. And this is in the words of my Text: where you have 1. *The duty commanded*. 2. *The reason* or *motive* to enforce it.

The *Duty* is in the first part; [*whatsoever thy hand findeth to do*] that is, whatever work is assigned thee by God to do in this thy transitory life) [*do it with thy might*] (that is, 1. *Speedily*, with-

without delay; 2. *Diligently*; and as well as thou art able; and not with ſloathfulneſs, or by the halves.)

2. The *Motive* is in the later part [*For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wiſdom in the grave whither thou goeſt*] (that is, It muſt be *now or never*: The *grave*, where thy work cannot be done, will quickly end thy opportunities.) The *Caldee* Paraphraſe appropriates the ſenſe too narrowly to *works of Charity*, or *Alms*; [*whatſoever good and almsgiving thou findeſt to do*]: and the Moving reaſon they read accordingly [*for nothing but thy works of righteouſneſs and mercy follow thee.*] But the words are more general.

and the sense is obvious, contained in these two Propositions.

Doct. 1. *The work of this life cannot be done, when this life is ended.* Or, *There is no working in the grave, to which we are all making haste.*

Doct. 2. *Therefore while we have time, we must do our best: or do the work of this present life with vigour and diligence.*

It is from an unquestionable and commonly-acknowledged truth, that *Solomon* here urgeth us to diligence in duty: and therefore to *prove it* would be but loss of time. As there are *two worlds* for man to live in, and so *two lives* for man to live; so each of these *lives* hath its *peculiar imployment*. This is the

the life of *preparation*: the next is the life of our *Reward* or *punishment*: We are *now* but in the *womb* of *Eternity*, and must live hereafter in the *open world*. We are *now* but set to *school* to *learn* the work that we must do for *ever*: This is the time of our *apprenticeship*; we are *learning* the *trade* that we must *live upon* in Heaven. We *run now*, that we may *then* receive the *Crown*: we *fight now*, that we may then *triumph* in victory. The *Grave* hath no *work*: but *Heaven* hath *work*, and *Hell* hath *suffering*. There is no *Repentance unto life* hereafter: but there is *Repentance unto torment*, and to *desperation*. There is no *Believing* of a *Happiness* unseen in order to the *obtaining* of it; or

of a *misery unseen* in order to the *escaping* of it; nor *believing in a Saviour* in order to *these ends*: But there is the *fruition* of the *Happiness* which was *here believed*; and *feeling* of the *misery* that men would *not believe*; and *suffering* from *him* as a righteous *Judge*, whom they rejected as a *merciful Saviour*. So that it is not *all work* that ceaseth at our Death: but only the work of *this present life*.

And indeed no reason can shew us the least probability of doing our work when our *Time* is done that was given us to do it in. If it can be done, it must be 1. by the *recalling* of our *Time*; 2. by the *return of life*; 3. or by *opportunity* in *another life*: But there is no hope of any of these. 1. Who

1. Who knoweth not that *Time cannot be recalled?* That which *once Was*, will be no more. *Yesterday* will never come again. *To day* is passing, and will not return. You may work while it is day: but when you have lost that day, it will not return for you to work in. While your *candle burneth*, you may make use of its light: but when it is *done*, it is too late to use it. No force of Medicine, no Orators elegant perswasions, no worldlings wealth, no Princes power, can call back one day or hour of time. If they could, what endeavours would there be used, when extremity hath taught them to value what they now despise? what chaffering would there be

at last, if *Time* could be *purchased*, for any thing that man can give. Then misers would bring out their wealth, and say, *All this will I give for one dayes time of Repentance more*: And Lords and Knights would lay down their Honours, and say, *Take all, and let us be the baseſt beggars, if we may but have one year of the Time that we miſpent!* Then Kings would lay down their Crowns, and say, *Let us be equal with the laweſt ſubjects, ſo we may but have the time again that we waſted in the Cares and Pleaſures of the world.* *Kingdoms* would then ſeem a *contemptible price* for the recovery of *Time*. The *Time* that is now *idled* and *talkt* away: the *Time* that is now *feaſted* and *complemented* away, that

is unnecessarily *sported* and *slept* away; that is wickedly and presumptuously *sin'd* away: how *precious* will it one day seem to all? How happy a bargain would they think that they had made, if at the dearest rates they could redeem it? The prophanest Mariner falls a praying, when he *fears* his *Time* is at an end. If importunity would then prevail, how earnestly would they pray for the recovery of *Time*, that formerly derided praying, or minded it not, or could not have while, or mocked God with lip-service, and customary forms, and feigned words in stead of praying? what a *Liturgy* would Death teach the trifling Time-despising Gallants, the idle busi-

ness,

ſie, dreaming-active ambitious, covetous Lovers of this world, if *Time* could be intreated to return! How paſſionately then would they roar out their requeſts! [*O that we might once ſee the dayes of Hope, and Means, and Mercy, which once we ſaw, and would not ſee! O that we had thoſe dayes to ſpend in penitential tears and prayers, and holy preparations for an endleſs life, which we ſpent at cards, in needleſs recreations, in idle talk, in humouring others, in the pleaſing of our fleſh, or in the inordinate cares and buſineſſes of the world! O that our youthful vigour might return! that our years might be renewed! that the dayes we ſpent in vanity might be recalled! that Miniſters might again be ſent to us publick-*

ly

ly and privately, with the message of grace which we once made light of! that the Sun would once more shine upon us! and patience and mercy would once more re-assume their work!] If cries or tears, or price or pains, would bring back lost-abused Time, how happy were the now-distracted, dreaming, dead-hearted, and impenitent world! If it would then serve their turn to say to the vigilant believers [*Give us of your oyl, for our lamps are gone out*] or to cry [*Lord, Lord, open to us*] when the door is shut, the *foolish* would be saved as well as the *wise*. *Matth.* 25. 8, 10, 11. But *this is the day of salvation! this is the accepted Time*. 2 *Cor.* 6. 2. While it is called *To day*, hearken, and harden not your

hearts.

hearts, *Pſ* 95.8. Awake thou that ſleepeſt, and ſtand up from thy ſloathful wilful death, & uſe the Light thats afforded thee by Chriſt, *Eph.* 5. 14. or elſe the everlaſting utter darkneſs will ſhortly end thy *Time* and *Hope*.

2. And as *Time* can *never be recalled*, ſo *Life* ſhall never be here *reſtored*: *Job* 14.14. [If a man die, ſhall he live (here) again? *All the dayes of our appointed time we muſt therfore wait* (in faith and diligence) *till our change ſhall come.*] One Life is appointed us on earth, to diſpatch the work that our everlaſting life dependeth on: And we ſhall have but *One*, Loſe that & all is loſt for ever: *Yet* you may *hear*, and *read*, and *learn*, and

pray:

pray: but when *this Life* is ended, it shall be so no more. You shall rise from the Dead indeed to *judgement*, and to the Life that now you are preparing for: but never to such a life *as this on earth*: your life is as the fighting of a Battel, that must be won or lost at once. There is no coming hither again to mend whats done amiss. Oversights must be *presently* corrected by *Repentance*, or else they are everlastingly past remedy. *Now* if you *be not* truly converted, *you may be*: If you find that you are carnal and miserable, you may be healed: If you are unpardoned, you may be pardoned: If you are Enemies, you may be reconciled to God. But when once the thred of life

life is cut, your opportunities are at an end. Now you may enquire of your friends and Teachers, what a poor soul must do that he may be saved; and you may receive particular instructions and exhortations; and God may bless them to the illuminating, renewing and saving of your souls: But when Life is past, it will be so no more. O then, if desperate souls might but return, and *once more* be tried with the means of life, what joyful tidings would it be! How welcome would the messenger be that bringeth it! Had *Hell* but such an offer as this, and would *any cries* procure it from their righteous Judge, O what a change would be among them!

How

How importunately would they cry to God [O send us once again unto the Earth: Once more let us see the face of Mercy, and hear the tenders of Christ and of salvation: Once more let the Ministers offer us their helps, and teach us in season and out of season, in publick and in private, and we will refuse their help and exhortations no more: we will hate them, and drive them away from our houses and Towns no more: Once more let us have thy word, and ordinances, and try whether we will not believe them, & use them better then we did. Once more let us have the help and company of thy Saints, & we will scorn them, and abuse them, and persecute them no

more

more. O for the great unvaluable Mercy of such a Life as once we had! O Try us once more with such a life, and see whether we will not contemn the world, and close with Christ, and live as strictly, and pray as earnestly, as those that we hated and abused for so doing: O that we might once more be admitted into the holy Assemblies, and have the Lords Daies to spend in the business of our salvation! We would plead no more against the power and purity of the Ordinances; We would no more call that day a burden, nor hate them that spent it in works of Holiness, nor plead for the liberty of the flesh therein.

It makes my heart even shake within

within me, to think with what cries those damned souls would strive with God, and how they would roar out [*O try us once again,*] if they had but the *least* encouragement of *Hope!* But *it will not be, It must not be!* They *had* their *Day*, and would not know it: They cannot *lose* their *Time* and *have* it. They had faithful Guides, and would not follow them: Teachers they had, but would not learn. The dust of their feet must witness against them; because their entertained obeyed message, cannot witness for them. *Long* did Christ wait with the patient tenders of his blood and spirit; His Grace was long and earnestly offered them, but could not be regarded

ed and received: And they cannot finally refuse a Christ, and yet have a Christ; or refuse his mercy, and yet be saved by it. He that would have *Lazarus* sent from the *dead*, to *warn* his unbelieving *Brethren* on Earth, no doubt would have strongly purposed *himself* on a reformation, if he might *once more* have been tried: And how earnestly would he have beg'd for such a *Trial*, that beg'd so hard for a drop of water? *Luke* 16. 24, 27, 28 But alas, such mouths must be stopt for ever with a [*Remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things*] v. 25.

So that *it is appointed for all men once to die, and after that the judgement*, Hebr. 9. 27. But there's

there's no return to earth again: The places of your abode, imployment and delight, shall know you no more. You must see these faces of your friends, and converse in flesh with men no more! *This* world, *these* houses, *that* wealth and Honour, as to any fruition, must be to you as if you had never known them. You must assemble here but a little while! yet a little longer, and we must preach, and you must hear it no more for ever. That therefore which you will do, must *presently* be done, or it will be too late. If *ever* you will Repent, and Believe, it must be *Now*: If *ever* you will be converted and sanctified, it must be *Now*. If ever you will be pardoned

doned and reconciled to God, it must be *Now*. If *ever* you will reign, its now that you must fight and conquer. O that you were wise, that you understood this, and that you would consider your latter end, *Deut.* 32. 29. And that you would let those words *sink down* into *your hearts*, which came from the *heart* of the Redeemer, as was witnessed by his tears, *Luk.* 19. 41, 42. [*If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace. But now they are hidden from thine eyes.*] And that these warnings may not be the less regarded, because you have *so often* heard them, when often hearing increaseth your obligation, and diminisheth not the

truth.

truth, or your danger.

3. And as there is no *Return* to *Earth*, so is there no doing *this work* hereafter. Heaven and Hell are for *other work*. If the Infant be *dead-born*, the open world will not *revive* him: That which is generated, and born a *beast*, or *serpent*, will not by all the influences of the Heavens, or all the powers of Sun or Earth, become a *Man*. The *second* and *third* concoction presuppose the *first*: The *harvest* doth presuppose the *seed-time*, and the labour of the husbandman. Its *now* that you must *sow*, and *hereafter* that you must *reap*. Its *now* that you must *work*, and then that you must receive your *wages*.

Is this believed and consider-

ed

ed by the sleepy world? Alas sirs, do you live as men that must live here no more? Do you work as men that must work no more, and pray as men that must pray no more, when once the Time of work is ended? What thinkest thou, poor besotted sinner! will God command *the Sun to stand still*, while thou rebellest or forgettest *thy work* and *him*? Dost thou look he should pervert the course of *nature*, and continue the spring and seed-time till thou hast a *mind* to *sow*? or that he will return the dead-born or mishapen Infant into the womb, that it may be better formd or quickened? Will he renew thy age, and make thee young again, and call back the

hours

hours that thou prodigally wastedst on thy lusts and idleness? Canst thou look for this at the hand of God, when Nature and Scripture assure thee of the contrary? If not, why hast thou not yet done with thy beloved sins? Why hast thou not yet begun to live? Why sittest thou still, while thy soul is unrewed? and all thy preparation for death and judgement is yet to make? How fain would Satan find thee thus at death? How fain would he have leave to blow out thy candle, before thou hast entered into the way of life? Dost thou look to have Preachers sent after thee, to bring thee the mercy which thy contempt here left behind? Wilt thou hear and be convert-

ed in the Grave and Hell? or wilt thou be saved without holiness? that is, In despight of God that hath resolv'd, it *shall not be*. O ye *sons of sleep*, of *death*, of *darkness*, *awake*, and *live*, and *hear the Lord*, before the Grave and Hell have shut their mouths upon you! *Hear now*, lest hearing be too late! *Hear now*, if you will *ever* hear. *Hear now*, if you *have ears to hear*! And O ye sons of *Light*, that see what sleeping sinners see not, call to them, and ring them such a peal of lamentations, tears, and compassionate intreaties, as is suited to such a dead and doleful state! Who knows but God may bless it to awake them?

If any of you be so far awakened,

kened, as to ask me what I am calling you to do; My Text tells you in general, Up and be Doing: Look about you, and see what you have to do, and Do it with your might.

1. [Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do] That is, whatsoever is a Duty imposed by the Lord, whatsoever is a Means conducing to thy own or others welfare. Whatsoever *Necessity calleth* thee to do, and *Opportunity alloweth* thee to do.

[*Thy hand findeth*] that is, Thy executive powers by the conduct of thy understanding, is now to do.

[*Do it with thy might:*] Do thy best in it. 1. *Trifle not*, but do it *presently*, without *unnecessary Delay*. 2. Do it *Resolutely*.

Remain not *doubtful*, *unresolved*, in suspense, as if it were yet a question with thee whether thou shouldst do it or not.

3. Do it with thy most *awakened affections*, and serious intention of the powers of thy soul. *Sleepiness* and *insensibility* are most unsuitable to such works. It is a *peculiar people zealous of good works*, that Christ hath purchased to himself, Tit. ii. 14.

4. Do it with all *necessary forecast* and contrivance: Not with a *distracting hindering Care*; but with such a Care as may shew that you despise not your Master, and are not regardless of his work. And with such a care as is suited to the difficulties and nature of the

thing, and as is necessary to the due accomplishment.

5. Do it not slothfully, but vigorously and with diligence. Suck not at thy labour: Lest thou hear [*Thou wicked and slothful servant*, Mat. 25. 26. *Hide not thy hand in thy bosome with the slothful*, and say not, *There is a Lion in the way*, Prov. 26. 13, 14. The *negligent* and the *vicious*, the *waster* and the *slothful*, differ but as *one brother from another*, Prov. 18. 9. As the *self-murder* of the wilfully ungodly, so also the *desire* of the *slothful* killeth him; because his hands refuse to labour, *Prov.* 21. 25. The soul of the sluggard *desireth* and hath *nothing*; but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat, *Pro.* 13. 4.

Be not slothful in business, but be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, Rom. 12.11.

6. Do it with *Constancie*, and not with destructive pawses and intermissions, or with wearinesse and turning back. *The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that is of clean hands shall be stronger and stronger*, Job 17.9. *Be stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord*, 1 Cor. 15.58. *Be not weary of well doing: for in due season we shall reap if we faint not*, Gal. 6.9. These six particulars are necessary, if you will observe the precept in my Text.

But that misunderstanding

hinder not the performance. I shall acquaint you further with the sense, by these few explicatory cautions.

1. The *Might* & *Diligence* here required, excludeth not the necessitie of *Deliberation* and *Prudent* conduct. Otherwise, the *faster* you go, the *further* you may go out of the way; and misguided zeal may spoil all the work, and make it but an injurie to others or your selves. A little imprudence in the season, and order, and manner of a duty, sometimes may spoil it, and hinder the success, and make it do more hurt then good. How many a Sermon, or prayer, or reproof, is made the matter of derision & contempt, for some imprudent passages or deport-

ment? God sendeth not his servants to be *jesters* of the world, or to play the *mad-men*, as *David* in his fears: we must be *wise* and *innocent*, as well as *resolute* and *valiant*: Though *fleshly and worldly wisdom* be not desirable, as being but *foolishness* with God; yet the *wisdom which is from above, and is first pure, and then peaceable*, and is acquainted with the high and hidden mysteries, and is *justified of her children*, must be the *Guide* of all our holy actions. Holiness is not *blind*: *Illumination* is the first part of Sanctification. Believers are *children of the Light*. Nothing requireth so much *wisdom* as the matters of God, and of our salvation. Folly is most unsuitable

to

to such excellent employments, and most unbeseeming the sons of the most High. It is a *spirit of wisdom* that anoynteth all the Saints, 1 Cor. 3. 19. & 2. 6, 7. Eph. 1. 8, 17. Col. 3. 16. It is the *treasures of wisdom* that dwell in Christ, and are communicated to his members, Col. 2. 3. We must *walk in wisdom towards them that are without*, Col. 4. 5. And our *works* must be *shewn out of a good conversation, with meekness of wisdom*, Jam. 3. 13. Yet I must needs say, that its more in *great things* then in *small*, in the *substance* then the *circumstances*, in a *sound judgement & estimate* of things, and suitable choise and prosecution, then in *fine expressions* or *deportment*, answering proud

mens expectations.

2. Though you must *work* with your *Might*, yet with a *diversitie* agreeable to the qualitie of your several works. Some works must be preferred before others: All cannot be done at once. Thats a *sin* out of season, which in season is a *duty*. The *Greatest*, and the *most urgent* work must be preferred. And *some works* must be done with *double fervour* and resolution, and some with *less*. Buying, and selling, and marrying, and possessing, and using the world, must be done with a fear of *over-doing*, and in a sort *as if we did them not*, though *they* also must have a necessary diligence, 1 *Cor.* 7. 29, 30, 31. *Gods Kingdome* and its *Righteousness* must

be

be *first sought*, Mat. 6. 33. And our *labour after the meat that perisheth*, must be comparatively *remisse*, John 6. 27.

3. Lastly, it is not an *irregular*, not a *self-disturbing*, *vexatious violence* that is required of us: but a sweet well-setled resolution, and a delightful expeditious diligence, that makes the wheels go merrily on, and the more easily get over those rubs and difficulties that clog and stop a sloathful soul.

And now will you lend me the *assistance* of your *Consciences*, for the transcribing of this command of God upon your hearts, and taking out a Copy of this order, for the regulating of your lives?

What-

[*whatsoever*] is not a word *so comprehensive* as to include any *vanity* or *sin*; but *so comprehensive* as to include *all your Duty*.

1. (To begin with the *lowest*): the very works of your *bodily callings* must have *diligence*. *In the sweat of your brows you must eat your bread*, Gen. 3.19. *Six dayes shalt thou labour, and do all that thou hast to do*, Ex. 20.9. *He that will not work, let him not eat*, 2 Thes. 3.10. *Disorderly walkers, busie-bodies, that will not work with quietness, and eat their own bread*, are to be *avoided* and *shamed* by the Church, 2 *Thes.* 3.6,11,12,14. *Lazy servants* are unfaithfull to men, and disobedient to God, who commandeth them to *obey*

their

their Masters according to the flesh (unbelieving, ungodly Masters) *in all things* (that concerns their service) *and that not with eye-service as man-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, and in the fear of God, doing whatsoever they do as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord* (even for this) *they shall receive the reward of the inheritance*, Col. 3. 22, 23, 24. *But he that doth wrong* (by sloathfulness, or unfaithfulness) *shall receive for the wrong which he hath done*, ver. 25.

Success is Gods ordinary temporal reward of *diligence*, Prov. 10. 4. and 12. 24, 27. And diseases, poverty, shame, disappointment, or self tormenting melancholy, are his usual punishments

nishments of sloath. *Hard labour* redeemeth *Time*; you will have the more to lay out on *greater works*: The *slothful* is still *behind hand*, and therefore must leave much of his work undone.

2. Are you *Parents* or *Governours* of *families*? you have *work to do* for *God*, and for *your children and servants souls*: *Do it with your might*: Deal *wisely*, but *seriously* and *frequently* with them about their sin, their duty, and their hopes of heaven; Tell them *whither* they are going, and *which way* they must go: Make them understand that they have a *higher Father* and *Master* that must be first served, and *greater* work to do then *yours*. *Waken* them from their

natural

natural *insensibility* and *sloath*: Turn not all your *family duties* into *lifeless customary forms*, (whether *extemporate*, or by *rote*) speak about God, and Heaven, and Hell, and Holiness, with that seriousness as beseems men that believe what they say, and would have those they speak to, to believe it. Talk not either drowsily, or lightly, or jeastingly of such dreadful, or joyful, and expressible things. Remember, that *your families* and *you* are going to the grave, and to the world where there is no more room for your exhortations. There is no *Catechising*, *examining*, or *serious instructing* them in the *grave* whither they and you are going. *It must be now or never*: And therefore do

it with your might. The words of God must be in your hearts, and you must diligently teach them to your children, talking of them when you sit in your houses, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up, Deut. 6.6,7,8. and 11. 18, 19, 20.

3. Have you ignorant or ungodly neighbours, whose misery calls for your compassion, and relief? Speak to them and help them with prudent diligence. Lose not your opportunities: Stay not till Death hath stopt your mouths, or stopt their ears. Stay not till they are out of Hearing, and taken from your converse. Stay not till they are in Hell, before you warn them of it, or till Heaven be lost, before you have seriously called

to

to them to remember it. Go to their houses: take all opportunities: stoop to their infirmities: bear with unthankful frowardness: It is *for mens salvation*: Remember there is no place for your instructions or exhortations in the *Grave* or *Hell*. *Your dust* cannot speak, and *their dust* cannot hear. Up therefore and be doing with all your might.

4. Hath God intrusted you with the *Riches of this world*, with *many* talents or with *few*, by which he looketh you should relieve the needy, and especially should promote those works of *piety* which are the greatest *charity*? *Give* (prudently, but willingly and liberally) while you have to give. It is *your Gain*: The time of *market* for your

your souls: and of *laying up a treasure in Heaven*; and letting your money to the most gainful Usury; and of *making you friends of the mammon of unrighteousness*; and *furthering* your salvation, by that which *hindereth* other mens, and occasioneth their perdition. [*As you have opportunity, do good to all men, but especially to the household of faith*] Gal. 6. 6, 7, 8, 9, 12. [*Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt finde it after many dayes. Give a portion to seven and to eight, for thou knowest not what evil may be upon the earth*] Eccles. 11. 1, 2. [*In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, this or that, or whether*

they

they both shall be alike good] v. 6. [*Withhold not good from them to whom it is due; when it is in the power of thy hand to do it: say not to thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give, when thou hast it by thee*] Prov. 3. 27, 28. *Lay up a foundation for the time to come: Do good before thy heart be hardened, thy riches blasted and consumed, thy opportunities taken away; part with it before it part with thee.* Remember, it must be *Now or Never:* There is no working in the Grave.

5. Hath God intrusted you with *Power* or *Interest*, by which you may promote his honour in the world, and relieve the oppressed, and restrain the rage of impious malice? Hath he made

you

you *Governours*; and put the sword of Justice into your hands: up then and be doing with your might. Defend the innocent, protect the servants of the Lord, cherish them that do well, be a terror to the wicked, encourage the *strictest obedience* to the universal Governour, discountenance the breakers of his Laws: Look not to be reverenced or obeyed *before him*, or more carefully then he: Openly maintain his Truth and worship without fear or shame: Deal gently and tenderly with his lambs and little ones: Search after vice that you may successfully suppress it. Hate those temptations that would draw you to man-pleasing, temporizing, remissness, or

countenancing sin; but especially those that would ensnare you in a *controversie with Heaven*, and in quarrels against the *wayes of holiness*; or in that self-confounding sin of abusing and oppoſing the people that are most careful to please the Lord. Your trust is great, and so is your advantage to do good: And how great will be your account, and how dreadful, if you be unfaithful? As you *signifie* more then hundreds or thousands of the meaner sort, and your actions do *most good* or *hurt*; so you must expect to be accordingly *dealt with*, when you come to the impartial, final judgment. Befriend the Gospel as the Charter of your everlasting priviledges; *Own*

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those that Christ hath told you *he will own.* Use them as men that are ready to hear [*Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my Brethren, you did it unto me*] Mat. 25. *Know not a wicked person:* but let *your eyes be on the faithful of the land, that they may dwell therein, and lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty,* Psal. 101. 1. Tim. 2. 2. [*Let those that work the work of the Lord, be with you without fear*] 1 Cor. 16. 10. Remember that it is the Character of a *Pharisee* and *Hypocrite,* to see the *mote of the non-observance of a ceremony, or tradition, or smaller matter* of difference in Religion, in *their Brothers eye,* and not to see the beam of *hypocrisie, injustice,* and *malicious*

cruel

cruel opposition of Christ and his Disciples, in their *own eyes*: And that is the brand of them that *please not God*, that are *filling up their sins*, on whom *Gods wrath* is coming *to the utmost*, to *persecute the servants of the Lord, forbidding them to Preach to the people that they might be saved*, 1 Thes. 2. 15, 16.

Learn well the *second*, and the *hundred and first* Psalm: And *write* these sentences on your *walls* and *doors*, as an Antidote against that self-undoing sin: [*Mat.* 18. 6. *Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a milstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.*] Zach. 2. 8. [*He that toucheth*

toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye.] Rom. 14. 1, 2. and 15. 1. [*Him that is weak in the faith, receive you: but not to doubtful disputations.* —— *For God hath received him.*] Mat. 10. 40, 41, 42. [*He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me. He that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous mans reward: And whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones, a cup of cold water only in the name of a Disciple, Verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.*] If you love not the *Godly*, love *your selves*, (so far as to such self-love is possible) wound not your *own hearts*, to make their *fingers*

bleed

bleed. Damn not your *ſouls*, (and that by the *ſureſt, neareſt* way;) that you may hurt *their bodyes*. Provoke not God to *thruſt you* from his preſence, and deny your ſuits, by your *dealing ſo with them*: ſtop not your *own mouths*, when your miſery will beſpeak your lowdeſt cryes for mercy by your ſtoping the mouths of the ſervants of the Lord, and refuſing to hear their requeſts for juſtice. If you have the Serpents enmity againſt the womans ſeed, you muſt expect the Serpents doom: *Your heads will be bruiſed*, when you have *bruiſed their heels*, Gen. 3. 15. *Kick not againſt the pricks*, Act. 9. Let not *bryers and thornes ſet themſelves in battle againſt the Lord*,

lest he go therefore through them and burn them together, Isa. 27. 4.

I speak not any of this by way of *accusation*, or *dishonourable reflection* on the *Magistrate*. Blessed be God that hath given us the comfort of *your defence*. But knowing what the Tempter aymeth at, and where it is that your danger lyeth, and by what means the rulers of the earth have been undone, faithfulness commandeth me to tell you of the *snare*, and to set before you *good* and *evil*, as ever I would escape the guilt of betraying you by flattery, or cruel and cowardly silence.

And especially when your *Magistracy* is but *annual*, or for a *short time*, it concerneth you to be *doing with your might*. *It is* but

but *this year*, or more space of time, that you have to do this special service in; Lose *this* and lose *all*. By what men on earth should God be eminently served and honoured, if not by Magistrates, whom he hath eminently advanced, impowred and intrusted? With considerate foresight, seriously ask your selves the question, Are you willing to hear, at the day of your accounts, that you had but *one year*, or a *few*, to do God *special service in*, and that you *knew this*, and yet *would not do it*? Can your hearts bear it then, to hear and think, that you *lost*, and *wilfully lost* such an opportunity? Look about you then, and see what is to be done. Are there not *idle*

houses to be suppress, and *drunkards* and riotous persons to be restrained; Preaching and Piety to be *promoted*? *Do it with your Might*: For it must be *Now or Never*.

6. To come yet a little nearer you, and speak of the work that is yet to be done in your *own souls*; Are any of you yet in the *state of unrenewed nature*, *born only* of the *flesh*, and not of the *Spirit*, Joh. 3.3,5,6. *Minding the things of the flesh, and not the things of the Spirit*? Rom. 8.1,5,7,9,13. and consequently yet in the *power of Satan*, *taken captive by him at his will*, Act. 26.18. 2 Tim. 2.26,27. *Up and be doing*, if thou love thy soul. If thou care whether thou be in *Joy* or *Misery for ever*, be-

wail

wail thy sin and spiritual distress: Make out to Christ, cry mightily to him for his renewing and reconciling pardoning grace: Plead his satisfaction, his merits and his promises; Away with thy rebellion, and thy beloved sin; Deliver up thy soul entirely to Christ, to be sanctified, governed and saved by him. Make no more demurrs about it; it is not a matter to be questioned, or trifled in. Let the *earth* be acquainted with thy *bended knees*, and the *aire* with thy *complaints* and *cries*, and *men* with thy *confessions* and *enquiries* after the way of life; and *heaven* with thy sorrows, desires and resolutions, till thy *soul* be *acquainted* with the *Spirit of*

Christ, (Rom. 8. 9.) and with the *new*, the *holy* and *heavenly nature*; and thy *heart* have received the *transcript* of *Gods Law*, the *impress* of the *Gospel*, and so the *Image* of thy *Creator* and *Redeemer*. Ply this work with *all thy might*: For there is no *Conversion*, *Renovation*, or *Repentance unto life*, in the *Grave* whither thou goest. It must be *Now* or *Never*. And *Never saved* if *Never sanctified*, Heb. 12. 14.

7. Hast thou any *prevailing sin to mortifie*, that either *reigneth* in thee, or woundeth thee and keepeth thy soul in darkness and unacquaintedness with God? Assault it resolutely: Reject it speedily: Abhor the motions of it: Turn away from

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the persons or things that would entice thee. Hate the *doors* of the Harlot, and of the Alehouse, or the gaming house: and go not as the *Ox to the slaughter*, and as a *bird to the fowlers snare*, and as a *fool to the correction of the stocks*, as if thou *knewest not that it is for thy life*,] Prov. 7. 22, 23. Why thou befooled stupid soul! *wilt* thou be *tasting* of the poisoned cup? *wilt* thou be *sporting* thee with the *bait*? Hast thou *nowhere* to *walk* or *play thee*, but at the brink of hell? *Must not the flesh be crucified with its affections and lusts*? Gal. 5. 24. *Must* it not be *tamed* and *mortified*, or thy soul condemned? Rom. 8. 13. 1 Cor. 9. 27. *Run not therefore as at uncertainty: fight not as one that*

beats the dire, ver. 26. seeing this *must* be done, or thou art undone, delay and dally with sin no longer: Let this be the day; resolve, and resist it with thy might: It must be *Now* or *Never*: when death comes, it is too late. It will be then no reward to leave thy sin, which thou canst keep no longer: No part of Holiness or Happiness, that thou art not drunk, or proud, or lustful in the grave or hell. As thou art wise therefore *know* and *take* thy *Time*.

8. Art thou in a *declined lapsed state?* decayed in grace? Hast thou lost thy first desires and love? do thy *first works*, and do them *with thy might*. Delay not, but remember from whence thou art fallen, and what

what thou hast lost by it; and into how sad a case thy folly and negligence hath brought thee: say, *I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me then now*, Hos. 2.7. Cry out with *Job* 29. 2, 3, 4, 5. [*O that I were as in months past! as in the dayes when God preserved me! when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness. As I was in the dayes of my youth, when the secret of God was on my tabernacle, when the Almighty was yet with me.* —] *Return* while thou *hast day*, lest the *night surprize* thee: Loyter and delay no more; thou hast lost by it already: thou *art* far behind hand. Bestir thee therefore with all thy *might*.

9. Art thou in the *darkneſs of uncertainty* concerning thy *converſion*, and thy *everlaſting ſtate*? Doſt thou not *know* whether thou be in a ſtate of life or death? and what ſhould become of thee, if *this were the day* or *hour* of thy change? If thou art *careful about it*, and *enquireſt* and *uſeſt the means* that God hath appointed thee for aſſurance: I have then no more to ſay to thee now, but, *wait* on God, and thou ſhalt not be diſappointed or aſhamed: Thou ſhalt have aſſurance in due time, or be ſaved before thou wouldſt believe thou ſhouldſt be ſaved. Be patient and obedient, and the light of Chriſt will ſhine upon thee, and yet thou ſhalt ſee the dayes of Peace. But if

thou

thou art *careless* in thy *uncertainty*, and mindest not so great a business, be awakened and call thy soul to its account; search and examine thy heart and life: Read and consider and take advice of faithful guides. Canst thou carelesly sleep, and laugh, and sport, and follow thy lesser business as if thy salvation were made sure, when thou knowest not *where* thou must *dwell for ever? examine your selves whether you be in the faith; prove your selves; know ye not your own selves, that Christ is in you except you are reprobates?* 2 Cor. 13. 5. *Give all diligence* (in time) *to make your calling and election sure*, 2 Pet. 1. 10. In the *Grave* and *Hell* there is no making sure of heaven:

ven: you are then past enquiries and self-examinations, in order to any recovery or *hope*. Another kind of tryal will finally *resolve* you. Up therefore and diligently ply the work: it must be *Now* or *Never*.

10. In all the *duties* of thy *Profession* of *Piety*, *Justice*, or *Charity*, to *God*, *thy self*, or *others*, *up and be doing with thy might*. Art thou seeking to enflame thy soul with *love* to God? plunge thy self in the Ocean of his *love*, admire his mercies, gaze upon the representations of his transcendent goodness; *O taste and see that the Lord is gracious!* Remember that he must be *Loved with all thy heart and soul and might*; canst thou pour out thy love upon a creature,

creature, and give but a few barren drops to God?

When thou art *Fearing him*, let his Fear *command* thy soul, and conquer all the fear of man.

When thou art *Trusting him*, do it without distrust, and cast all thy care and thy self upon him: Trust him as a creature should trust his God, and the members of Christ should trust their Head and dear Redeemer.

When thou art making mention of his great and dreadful *name*, O do it with *Reverence*, and *awe*, and *admiration*: And *take not the name of God in vain*.

When thou art *Reading his Word*, let the Majesty of the Author, and the Greatness of the matter, and the Gravitie of the stile, possess thee with an obe-

obedientiall fear. Love it, and let it be sweeter to thee then the honey-comb, and precious-ser then thousands of Gold and Silver. Resolve to do what there thou findest to be the will of God. When thou art *praying in secret*, or in thy *family*, *Do it with thy might*: Cry mightily to God, as a soul under sin, and wants and danger, thats stepping into an endless life, should do. Let the reverence and the fervour of thy prayers shew that its *God himself* that thou art speaking to: that its *Heaven its self* that thou art praying for; *Hell its self* that thou art praying to be saved from. Wilt thou be dull and sensless on *such an errand* to the *Living God*? Remember what

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lieth upon thy *failing*, or *prevailing*: and that it muſt be *Now or Never*.

Art thou a *Preacher of the Goſpel*, and takeſt charge of the *ſouls of men? Take heed to thy ſelf and to the whole flock, over which the Holy Ghoſt hath made thee an Overſeer, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchaſed with his own blood.* Let not the blood of ſouls, and the blood that purchaſed them, be required at thy hands, *Act.* 20. 28. *Ezek.* 3. 18,20. Thou *art charged before God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſhall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his Kingdome, that thou preach the word, be inſtant in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon, reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all long-*

ſuffering

ſuffering and doctrine, 2 Tim. 4. 1, 2. *Teach every man, and exhort every man*, Col. 1. 28. *Even night and day with tears*, Acts 20, 31. *Save men with fear, pulling them out of the fire*, Jud. *Cry aloud: lift up thy voice like a trumpet: tell them of their tranſgreſſions*, Iſa. 58. 1. *Yet thou* art *alive*, and *they alive: yet* thou haſt a tongue, and they have ears: The final ſentence hath not yet cut off their hopes. *Preach* therefore, and *Preach with all thy Might*. Exhort them *privately* and *perſonally* with all the *ſeriouſneſs* thou canſt. *Quickly*, or it will be *too late*. *Prudently*, or Satan will *overreach* thee: *Fervently*, or thy words are like to be diſregarded. Remember when thou

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lookest them in the faces, when thou beholdest the Assemblies, that They must be *Converted* or *Condemned*; *sanctified* on *Earth*, or *tormented* in *Hell*; and that *this is the Day*: It must be *Now or Never*.

In a word, Apply this *quickening precept* to *all the duties* of thy Christian course. Be *Religious*, and *Just*, and *Charitable* in *good sadness*, if you would be taken for such when you look for the reward. *Work out your salvation with fear and trembling*, Phil. 2.12. *Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many shall seek to enter and shall not be able*, Mat. 7.13. Luke 12.24. *Many run, but few receive the prize: so run that you may obtain*, 1 Cor. 9.24. *If the Right-*

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teous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? 1 Pet. 4 18. Let the doting world deride your diligence, and set themselves to hinder and afflict you: It will be but a little while before experience change their minds, and make them sing another song. Follow Christ fully: Ply your work, & lose no time: The Judge is coming. Let not words, nor any thing that man can do, prevail with you to sit down, or stop you in a journey of such importance. Please God, though flesh, and friends, and all the world should be displeased. Whatever come of your Reputation, or Estates, or Liberties, or Lives, be sure you look to Life Eternal; and cast not that

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on any hazard, for a withering flower, or a pleasant dream, or a picture of commoditie, or any vanitie that the Deceiver can present. *For what shall it profit you to win the world and lose your soul?* Mat. 16.26. Or to have been honoured and obeyed on Earth, when you are under the wrath of God in Hell? Or that your flesh was once provided with varietie of delights, when its turnd to rottennesse, and must be raised to torments? Hold on therefore in Faith, and Holinesse, and Hope, though Earth and Hell should rage against you; though all the world by force or flatterie, should do the worst they can to hinder you. This is your trial: your *warfare*, is the *Resisting* of

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deceit, and of all that would *tempt* you to *Consent* to the means of your own destruction: *Consent not*, and you *conquer*: *Conquer*, and you are *Crowned*. The *combat* is all about *your Wills*; *Yield*, and you have *lost the day*. If the prating of ungodly fools, or the contemptuous jears of hardened sinners, or the frowns of unsanctified Superiors, could prevail against the Spirit of Christ, and the workings of an enlightened mind, then what man would be saved? You *deserve* damnation, if you will run into it to avoid a *mock*, or the loss of any thing that man can take from you. You are unmeet for Heaven, if you can part with it to save your purses. *Fear not them*

that

that can kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do: but fear him that can destroy both soul and body in Hell, Mat. 10. 28. Luke 12. 4,5. Obey God, though all the world forbid you. No power can save you from his Justice: And none of them can deprive you of his Reward. Though you lose your *Heads*, you shall save your *Crowns*: You no way save your lives so certainly, as by such losing them, *Mat.* 10. 39. *One thing is necessary*: Do that with speed, and care, and diligence, which *Must* be done, or you are lost for ever. They that are now against your much and earnest praying, will shortly cry as loud themselves in vain; When it is too late, how fervently

vently will they beg for mercie, that now deride you for valuing and seeking it it in time! But [*then they shall call upon God, but he will not answer: they shall seek him early, but shall not find him: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: They would none of his counsel, but despised all his reproof*] Prov. 1. 24. to the end.

Up therefore and work with all thy *might*. Let *unbelievers trifle* that know not that the righteous God stands over them, and know not that they are *now* to work for everlasting, and know not that Heaven or Hell is at the end. Let them delay, and laugh, and play, and dream away their Time, that are drunk with prosperitie, and mad with

with fleshly lusts and pleasures, and have lost their Reason in the cares, and delusions, and vain-glory of the world. But shall it be so with *thee* whose eies are opened, who seest the God, the Heaven, the Hell, which they do *but hear of* as unlikely things? Wilt thou *live awake*, as they that are asleep: Wilt *thou* do in the *day-light*, as they do in *the dark*? shall *Freemen* live as *Satans slaves*? shall the *Living lie as still* and useless as the *dead*? Work then while it is day; for the night is coming when none can work, *John* 9. 4.

It is not the works of the Mosaical Law, nor works that are conceited for their proper value to deserve any thing at

the

the hands of God, that I am all this while perſwading you to: But it is the works preſcribed you by Chriſt in the Goſpel, according to which you ſhall be ſhortly judged to *joy* or *miſery*, by Chriſt himſelf, that will call you to account. Theſe muſt be done with all your *Might*.

Object. But (you'l ſay perhaps) alas, *what Might have we? We have no ſufficiency of our ſelves; without Chriſt we can do nothing! And this we find when it comes to the trial.*

Anſ. 1. It is not a *Might* that is *Originally thine Own*, that I am calling thee to exerciſe: but that which thou haſt *already* received from God, and that which *he is ready* to beſtow. Uſe well but all the *Might* thou haſt,

and

and thou ſhalt find thy labour is not vain. Even the ſtrength of *Nature*, and of *Common Grace*, are talents which thou muſt improve.

2. Art thou *willing* to uſe the *Might* thou haſt, and to *have more*, and *uſe it if thou hadſt it?* If thou *art*, thou haſt then the ſtrength of Chriſt: Thou ſtandeſt not, and workeſt not by thy own ſtrength: His promiſe is engaged to thee, and his ſtrength is ſufficient for thee. But if thou art not *willing*, thou art without excuſe; when thou hadſt Heaven and Hell ſet open in the word of God to make thee *willing*, God will diſtinguiſh thy *wilfulneſs* from *unwilling weakneſs*.

3. There is more *Power* in

all of you then you use, or then you are well aware of. It wanteth but *awakening* to bring it into act. Do you not find in your *Repentings*, that the change is more in *your Will* then in *your Power*; and in the *awaking* of your *Will* and *Reason* into *act*, then in the addition of meer *abilities*? and that therefore you befool your selves for your sins and your neglects, and wonder that you had no more use of your understandings? Let but a storm at Sea, or violent sickness, or approaching death rowse up and waken the powers which you have, and you will finde there was much more asleep in you then you used.

I shall therefore next endea-

vour to awaken your abilities, or tell you how you should awaken them.

When your souls are drowsie, and you are forgetting your God, and your later end, and the matters of Eternitie have little force and savour with you; when you grow lazie and superficial, and Religion seems a lifeless thing; and you do your dutie as if it were in vain, or against your wills; when you can lose your time, and delay repentance; and friends, and profit, and reputation, and pleasure can be heard against the word of God, and take you off when you do all by the halves, and languish in your Christian course, as near to death; *Stir up your souls* with

the *vrgencie* of such *Questions* as these.

Qu. 1. *Can I do no more then this for God?* Who gave me all? Who deserveth all? Who seeth me in my duties and my sins? When he puts me *purposely* on the trial, what I can do for his sake and service, Can I *do no more?* Can I love him no more? and obey, and watch, and work no more?

Qu. 2. *Can I do no more then this for Christ?* For him that did so much for me? that lived so exactly; obeyed so perfectly; walked so inoffensively and meekly; despising all the *baits*, and *honours*, and *riches* of the world? that loved me to the death, and offereth me freely all his benefits, and would

would bring me to eternal Glory? Are these careless, cold and dull endeavours my best return for all this Mercie?

Qu. 3. *Can I do no more, when my salvation is the prize?* when Heaven or Hell depend much on it? when I know this before hand, and may see in the glass of the holy Scriptures what is prepared for the *Diligent* and the *Negligent*, and what work there is and will be for ever in Heaven and Hell on these accounts? Could I not do more, if my house were on fire, or my estate, or life, or friend in danger, then I do for my salvation?

Qu. 4. *Can I do no more for the souls of men?* when they are undone for ever if they be

not speedily delivered? Is this my Love and compassion to my neighbour, my servant, friend or child?

Q. 5. *Can I do no more for the Church of God?* for the publick good? for the peace and welfare of the Nation and our posteritie? in suppressing sin? in praying for deliverance? or in promoting works of publick benefit?

Qu. 6. *Can I do no more, that have tarried so long?* and go no faster, that have slept till the evening of my daies, when *Diligence* must be the discoverie of my Repentance?

Q. 7. *Can I do no more, that know not now but I am doing my last?* That see how fast my Time makes haste, and know I must

must be quickly gone? that know it must be *Now* or *Never*: and that this is all the time I shall have, on which an endless life dependeth?

Quest. 8. Can I do no *better, when I know before hand, what different aspects Diligence and Negligence will have, to the awakened soul in the review?* What a comfort it will be at death and judgement, to be able to say, I did my best, or lovered not away the Time I had? And what a vexatious and heart-disquieting thing it will then be to look back on Time as irrecoverably lost, and on a life of tryal, as cast away upon impertinencies, while the work that we lived for lay undone? shall I now by trifling prepare

such griping and tormenting thoughts; for my awakened conscience?

Quest. 9. Can I do no more, when I am sure I cannot do too much, and am sure there is nothing else to be preferred? and that its this I live for: and that life is for action, and disposeth thereunto; (and holy life for holy action) and that its better *not live*, then not attain the ends of living; when I have so many and unwearied enemies; when sloath is my danger, and the advantage of my enemy; when I know that Resolution and Vigorous diligence, is so necessary that all is lost without it; will temptations be resisted, and self denyed, and concupiscence mortified, and fleshly desires

desires tamed and subdued, and sin cast out, and a holy communion with heaven maintained with idleness and sloth? will families be well ordered, and Church, or City, or Country well governed? will the careless sinners that I am bound to help, be converted, and saved, with sitting still, and with some heartless cold endeavours?

Quest. 10. *Can I do no more that have so much help?* that have mercies of all sorts encouraging me, and creatures attending me; that have health to enable me, or affliction to remember and excite me, that have such a master, such a work, such a reward as better cannot be desired; who is less excusable for neglect then I?

Quest. 11. *Could I do no more, if I were sure, that my salvation lay on this one duty?* that according to *this prayer*, it should go with me *for ever*; or if the soul of my *child*, or *servant*, or neighbour must speed *for ever*, as my endeavours speed with them now for their conversion? for ought I know it may be thus.

Quest. 12. Would I have God to come with the spur and rod? How do I complain when affliction is upon me? And will I neither endure it, nor be quickened without it? Is it not better mend my pace and work, on easier terms?

I would not have distressed souls to use these considerations meerly to *disquiet* themselves

selves for their *infirmities*, and so live in *heaviness* and *self-vexation*, because they cannot be as good as they desire, or do as much and as well as they should do: It is not despair that will mend the matter, but make it worse. But I would wish the lazie slothful soul to plead these Questions with it self, and try whether they have no quickening power, if closely urged, and seriously considered.

Believe it, sirs, it is the *deceitfulness of prosperity* that keeps up the *reputation* of a *slothful life*, and makes *holy diligence* seem *unnecessary*. When affliction comes, awakened reason is ashamed of this, and seeth it as an odious thing.

By

By this time you may see, what difference there is, between the judgement of God, and of the world; and what to think of the understandings of those men, (be they *high* or *low*, *learned* or *unlearned*) that hate or oppose this *holy diligence*. God bids us *love*, and *seek*, and *serve* him, with all our *heart*, and *soul*, and *might*. And these men call them *Zealots*, and *Precisians*, and *Puritans*, that endeavour it; though, alas, they fall exceeding short, when they have done their best. It is one of the most wonderful monstrosities and deformities that ever befell the nature of man, that *men*, that *learned*

men,

men, that men that in other things are *wise*, should *seriously* think that the main of diligence to obey the Lord and save our souls, is *needless*, and that ever they should take it for a *crime*, and make it a matter of *reproach*; That the *serious, diligent obeying of Gods Laws*, should be the matter of the common disdain and hatred of the world; that no men are more *generally abhorred*, and toss up and down by impatient men, that great and small, the Rulers and the vulgar rabble, in *most places* of the earth cannot endure them; To think how the *fiercest man* that ever was born into the world, and did *hate his own brother* till he had proceeded to murder him, because he served

God

God better than himself, [*Because his own works were evil, and his brothers righteous*,] 1 Joh. 3. 12. And how *constantly* this horrid unnatural madness hath succeeded and raged in the world from *Cain* until this day! It is not in vain that the Holy Ghost addeth, in the next words, 1 *Joh.* 3. 13. [*Marvail not my brethren, if the world hate you*] implying that we are apt to *marvail at it*; as I confess I have *oft* and *greatly* done. Me thinks, it is so wonderful a *plague* and *stain* in Nature, that it doth very much to confirm me of the truth of Scripture; of the doctrine of mans fall, and original sin, and the necessity of a Reconciler, and of renewing grace.

Distracted,

Distracted, miserable souls! Is it not enough for you to refuse your *own salvation*, but you must be angry with all that will not imitate you? Is it not mad enough, and bad enough to *choose* damnation, but you must be offended with all that are not of your mind! If *you* will not believe God, that without Regeneration, Conversion, Holiness, and a Heavenly, Spiritual life, there is no Salvation to be hoped for (*Joh.* 3. 3, 5, 6. *Mat.* 18. 3. *Heb.* 12. 14. *Rom* 8. 9, 13. 2 *Cor.* 5. 17.) must *we all* be *unbelievers* with you? If you will laugh at hell till you are in it, must we do so too? If *God* and *glory* seem less worth to you, than your *fleshly pleasure for a time*, must we renounce our

our *Christianity* and our *Reason* for fear of differing from *you*? If *you dare differ* from your *Maker*, and the *Redeemer*, and the *Holy Ghost*, and all the *Prophets*, *Apostles*, and *Evangelists*, and all that ever came to Heaven, might not we be bold to differ from *you*? If *you* will needs be ungodly, and choose your everlasting wo, be patient with them that have more understanding, and dare not be so hardy, as to leap *after you* into the unquenchable fire: *Mock not* at *Holiness* if you have no mind of it. *Hinder not* them that *strive to enter in at the strait gate*, if you refuse your selves. Be not so desirous of company in Hell: It will prove no comfort to you,

you, or abatement of your pain.

But because you have the faces to contradict the God of truth, and to reproach that work which he commandeth, and to say, *what needs so much ado?* when he bids us *do it with all our might*, I will briefly tell you what you are doing, and shew you the ugly face of the scorner, and the filthy hearts of the enemies of Holiness, that if it may be, you may loath your selves.

1. *These enemies of Holy diligence, deny God with their works and lives, and are practical Atheists*; and it seems are so near of kin to [*that wicked one*] (see 1 *Joh.* 3, 12,) that they would have *all others* do so too. And

then

then how soon would *earth* be turned into *hell*! The case is plain: If *God* deserve not to be loved and served with all thy heart, and soul, and might, he is *not God*. And if thy wealth, or honour, or flesh, or friend, deserveth more of thy love, and care, and diligence then God, then that is thy God that deserveth best. See now what these deriders of purity and obedience do think of God, and of the world.

2. *These Cainites do blaspheme the Governour of the world*: When *he* hath *given Lawes* to the Creatures that he made of nothing, these wretches deride and hate men for obeying them. If *God* have not *commanded* that which you oppose, contradict

contradict it, and spare not: I would you were *much more* against that pretended Religion which *he commandeth not*. But if *he have commanded it*, and yet you *dare* revile them as too *Pure* and *Precise* that would obey it, what do you but charge the King of Saints with making Laws that are not to be obeyed? which must needs imply that they are *Foolish*, or *Bad*, though made by the *most Wise* and *Good*.

3. *These Enemies of Holiness oppose the practice of the very first principles of all Religion.* For *Heb.* 11. 6. [*He that cometh to God must believe that God is, and that he is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*] And its *diligent seeking him* that

that they hate and set themselves against.

4. *Do not they judge Heaven to be less worth then Earth*; when they will do *less* for it, and would have others to do so too?

5. *They would have us all unchristen and unman our selves*; as if there were *no life to come*; or as if our *Reason* and all our *faculties* were given us *in vain*. For if they are not given us for greater matters then all the honours and pleasures of the world, they are *in vain*, or *worse*; and the life of man is but a dream and miserie. Were not a beast less miserable, if this were all?

6. *How base a price do these Caluinites set on the immortal soul*

of

of man, that think it not worth *so much ado*, as the careful obedience of the Lawes of Christ? Nor worth so much as they do themselves for their filthy sins and perishing flesh? But would have us so mad as to sell Heaven and our souls for a little sinful sloath and ease.

7. *These Enemies of Holiness would have men take their Mercies for their Hurt, and their greatest blessings for a burden or plague, and to run into hell to be delivered from them.* Why man, dost thou know *what Holiness is?* and what it is to have access to God? I tell thee it is the *forestaste of Heaven on Earth*. It is the the higheſt Glory, and sweeteſt delight, and chiefeſt commoditie to the soul. And

are

art thou afraid of having *too much* of this? What, *thou that hast none* (which should make thee tremble) art thou afraid of having *too much*? Thou that never *feareſt too much money*, nor *too much honour*, nor *too much health*, art thou afraid of *too much ſpiritual health and holineſs*? what ſhall be thy *deſire*, if thou loath and fly from thy *felicity*?

8. You that are loyal ſubjects, take heed of theſe [illegible] godly ſcorners: For by conſequence *they would tempt you to deſpiſe your King, and make a mock at the obeying of his Commands and Laws.* For if a man perſwade you to deſpiſe a *Judge*, he implieth that you may deſpiſe a *Conſtable*. No

King

King is so great in comparison of *God*, as a *fly* or *worm* is to *that King*. He therefore that would relax the Lawes of *God*, and make it seem a *needless thing* to obey him *diligently* and *exactly*, implieth that obedience to any of the sons of men is *much more needless*.

And you that are children or servants, take heed of the doctrine of these men: *Masters*, admit it not in to your *families*. If he be worthy to be scorned as a *Puritan* or *Precisian*, that is careful to please and obey the Lord, what scorn do your children and servants deserve, if *they* will be obedient and pleasing to *such as you*?

9. All you that are poor Tradesmen, take heed of the

consequences of the Cainites scorns, lest it make you give over the labours of your calling, and turn your selves and families into beggery. For if *Heaven* be not worth your *greatest labour*, your *bodies* are not worth the *least*.

10. *These Cainites speak against the awakened Consciences, and the confessions of all the world.* Whatsoever they may say in the dream of their blind presumption and securitie, at last, when Death hath opened their eies, they all cry, O that we had been Saints! O that we might die the death of the righteous, and that our last end might be as his! O that we had spent that Time, and Care, and Labour for our souls, which we

spent

ſpent on that which now is gall to our remembrance! And yet theſe men will take no warning, but now oppoſe and deride that courſe that all the world do wiſh at laſt they had been as zealous for as any.

11. *The Enemy himſelf hath a conſcience within him*, that either grudgeth againſt his malicious impietie, and witneſſeth that he abuſeth them that are far better then himſelf; or at leaſt will ſhortly call him to a reckoning, and tell him better what he did, and make him change his face and tune, and wiſh himſelf in the caſe of thoſe that he did oppoſe.

12. To conclude, the *Caluinite is of that wicked one*, 1 John 3. 12. of *his Father the Deuil*,

John 8.41,44. and is his walking, speaking instrument on Earth, saying what he himself would say: He is the *open Enemy of God*. For who are *his Enemies*, but the *Enemies of Holiness*, of *his Laws*, of our *Obedience*, of his *Image*, and of his *Saints*? And how will Christ deal at last with *his Enemies*? Luk. 19.27. O that they knew, that foreseeing, they might escape! This is the *true*, the *ugly* picture of a *Cainite*, or *Enemy* of a *holy life*, that reproacheth *serious diligence* as a *precise* and *needless thing*, when God commandeth us, and Death, and the Grave, and Eternitie admonish us to do his work with all our Might. Now consider this ye that forget God

lest

lest he *tear you in pieces, & there be none to deliver you*, Psal. 50. 22.

But of all the opposers of *serious Holiness* in the world, there are none more unexcusable & deplorably miserable, then those that profess themselves *Ministers of Christ*. Would one *believe* that had not known them, that there are such men in the world? Alas, there are *too many*. Though Education, and the Laws of the Land engage them to preach *true doctrine*, yet are they *false Teachers* in the *Application*. For they never well learned the holy & heavenly doctrine which they preach, nor digested it, or received the power and impress of it upon their hearts; and

therefore retaining their natural corruptions, impietie and enmitie to the Life, and Power, and Practice of that Doctrine, they *indirectly* destroy what directly they would seem to build; and preach both *for God*, and *against him*; for *Christ* and the *Holy Spirit*, and *against them*; for *Godliness*, and *against it*, both in the same Sermon. In *General*, they must needs speak for the word of God, and a holy life: But when they come to the *particulars*, they secretly reproach it, and condemn the *parts*, while they commend the *whole*. In *General* they speak well of Religious, Godly, Holy people; But when they *meet* with them, they hate them, and make them Precisians,

ans, a Sect that is *everywhere spoken against, pestilent fellows, and movers of sedition*, as the Apostles were accused, *Act.* 24. 5. & 28. 22. and any thing that malice can invent to make them odious: And what they *cannot prove*, they will *closely intimate*, in the *false application* of their doctrines; describing them so as may induce the hearers to believe that they are a company of self-conceited Hypocrites, factious, proud, disobedient, turbulent, peevish, affecting singularity, desiring to ingross the reputation of Godliness to themselves, but secretly as bad as others. And when they have thus represented them to the ignorant sort of people, they have made the way of Godli-

nels odious, and sufficiently furnished miserable souls with prejudice and dislike; so that because the *persons* are thus made hateful to them, all serious diligence for Heaven, all tenderness of Conscience, and fear of sinning, all heavenly discourse, and serious preaching, reading, or praying, are also made odious for their sakes: For hearing so ill of the *persons*, and *seeing that these* are the *things* wherein they differ from others, they reduce their judgement of their *practices* to their foresetled judgement of the *persons*. When their diligence in their families, in prayer and instructions, in reading, and fruitful improvement of the Lords day, or any other acti-

ons

ons of strictness and holy industry are mentioned, these ungodly Ministers are ready to blot them with some open calumnies, or secret reproaches, or words of suspicion, to vindicate their own unholy lives, and make people believe that serious pietie is faction and hypocrisie. The black tincture of their minds, and the design and drift of their preaching may be perceived in the jeers, and girds, and slanderous intimations against the most diligent servants of the Lord. The *controverted truths* that such maintain, they represent as *errours*: Their *unavoidable errours* they represent as *heresie*: Their *duties* they represent as *faults*; and their *humane frailties* as

enormous *crimes*: They feign them to be guilty of the things that never entered into their thoughts: And if *some* that have professed Godliness, be guilty of greater crimes, they would make men believe that the rest are such, and that the familie of Christ is to be judged of by a *Judas*, and the scope is to intimate that either their Profession is *culpable*, or *needless*, and *less commendable*. *Regeneration* they would make to be but the entrance into the Church by Baptism, and any further Conversion, then the leaving off some gross sins, and taking up some heartless forms of dutie, to be but a fancie or unnecessary thing: And they would draw poor people to believe,

lieve, that if they be born a-gain Sacramentally of wate-they may be ſaved, though they be not born again by the *renewing of the Holy Spirit*. Being ſtrangers themſelves to the myſterie of *Regeneration*, and to the life of Faith, and a heavenly Converſation, and to the loving and ſerving God with all their Soul and Might, They firſt endeavour to quiet themſelves with a belief that theſe are but fancies or unneceſſary; and then to deceive the people with that by which they have firſt deceived themſelves.

And it is worthy your obſervation, *what it is in Religion* that theſe Formal Hypocrites *are againſt*. There are ſcarce

any words so sound or holy but they can bear them, if they be but deprived of their *Life*: Nor scarce any duties, if it be but *mortified*, but they can endure. But it is the *Spirit* and *Life* of all Religion which they cannot bear. As a *Body* differeth from a *Carkass*, not by the *parts*, but by the *Life*; so there is a certain *Life* in preaching, and prayer, and all other acts of worship, which is perceived by *several* sorts of hearers. The *Godly* perceive it to their *edification* and *delight*: For *here* it is that they are quickened and encouraged. *Life* begetteth *life*, as fire kindleth fire. The *ungodly* often perceive it to their vexation, if not to their conviction and conversion:

This

This *Life* in preaching, praying, disciplined reproofs and conference, is it which biteth and galleth, and disquieteth their consciences: and *this* they kick and rail against. *This* is the thing that will not let them sleep quietly in their sin and miserie; but is calling and jogging them to awake, and will not let them sin in peace, but will either convert them or torment them before the time. It is the *Life* of Religion that the Hypocrite *wants*; and the *Life* that he is *most against*. A *painted fire* burneth not. A *dead Lion* biteth not. The *Carkass* of an *Enemy* is not *formidable*. Let the *words* of that Sermon that *most offendeth them*, be separated from the *Life*, and put

into

into a *Homily*, and *said* or *read* in a *formal*, *drowſie*, or a *Schoolboys tone*, and they can *bear* it and *commend* it. Let the *ſame words* of prayer which now they like not, be *ſaid over* as a *lifeleſs cuſtomary form*, and they can like it well. I ſpeak not againſt the *uſe of forms*, but the *abuſe* of them: Not againſt the *Body*, but the *Carkaſs*. Let *forms themſelves* be uſed by a ſpiritual ſerious man, in a *ſpiritual ſerious manner*, with the interpoſition of any quickening exhortations, or occaſional paſſages, that tend to keep them waken and attentive, and make them *feel* what you *mean* and *are about*, and you ſhall ſee they love not ſuch *animated forms*. It is the *Living Chriſtian*, and

Lively

lively worship, and *serious spiritual Religion*, which they hate: *kill* it and they can *bear* it. Let the *picture* of my *enemy* be neater and comelier then his person was, and I can endure it in my bed-chamber, better then *himself* in the *meaneſt dreſs*. It is the *living Chriſtians* that in all parts of the world are chiefly perſecuted: Let them be *once dead*, and *deadhearted hypocrites* themſelves will honour them, eſpecially at a ſufficient diſtance: They will deſtroy the *living Saints*, and keep Holy dayes for the *dead* ones. *Wo to you, Scribes and Phariſes hypocrites, becauſe ye build the Tombs of the Prophets, and garniſh the Sepulchers of the Righteous; and ſay, if we had been in*

the

the days of our Fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the Prophets: Wherefore ye be witnesses unto your selves, that ye are the children of them which killed the Prophets: Fill ye up the measure of your Fathers: ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell! Mat. 23. 29, 30, 31, 32, 33. The dog that will not meddle with the *dead creature*, will pursue the *living*; and when he see it *stir no more*, will *leave it*. Christianity without *seriousness* is not *Christianity*; and therefore not lyable to the hatred of its enemies as such. Say any thing and do any thing how strict so ever, if you will but act it as a player on the stage,

stages, or do it coldly, slightly, and as if you were but in jeast, you may have their approbation. But it is this *life*, and *seriousness*, and worshipping God in *Spirit* and *truth*, that conviceth them that *they themselves are lifeless*, and therefore troubleth their deceitful peace, and therefore must not have their friendship. If it were the meer *bulk* of duty that they are weary of, how comes it to pass that a *Papist* at his Psalter, Beads, and Mass books, can spend more hours without much weariness or opposition, then we can do in serious worship? Turn all but into *words*, and *beads*, and *canonical hours* and *dayes*, and *shows*, and *ceremony*, and you may be as religious as you will,

and

and be *Righteous overmuch*, and few will hate, or reproach, or persecute you *among them*, as too precise or strict. But *living Christians* and *worship*, come among them like fire, that burneth them, and makes them smart, with a *word that is quick and powerful, sharper then any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, joynts and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*, Heb. 4. 12.

And the *enmity* of the *Cainites* may teach the *Christian*, what he should be, and wherein his *excellency* lieth. It is *life*, and *serionsnes* that your enemies hate: and therefore it is *life* and *serionsnes* that you must above all maintain; though

dead

dead-hearted hypocrites never so much oppose and contradict you.

O sirs, they are no trifles, but the greatest things that God hath set before you in his Word, and called you out to prosecute and possess: and your time of seeking them is short; and therefore you have no time for trifles, nor any to lose in idleness and sloath. And of all men Preachers should be most sensible of this. If *they were not* against serious holiness in *others*, it is double wickedness for such as they, to be *against it in themselves*. It is great things that they have to study and to speak of; and such as call for the greatest seriousness, and reverence and gravity in the speaker, and

and condemn all trifling in *matter* or in manner. A man that is sent of Christ to run for an immortal crown, or to direct others in such a race, to save his own, or other mens souls, from endless misery, should be ashamed to fill up his time with trifles, or to be slight and cold about such great and weighty things. All the heart, and soul, and might, is little enough for matters of such unspeakable importance. When I hear Preachers or people spend their time, in little impertinent fruitless things, that do but divert them from the great business of their lives, or to *dally* with the *greatest matters*, rather then to use them and treat of them with a seriousness suitable to their impor-

imporance, I often think of the words of *Seneca* the *serious Moralist*, as shaming the hypocrisie of such trifling Preachers and Professors of the Christian faith; [*Verba copiosa componis, & interrogans vincula nectis, & dicis, Acuta sunt ista: Nihil acutius aristâ; & in quo est utilis? Quædam inutilia & inefficacia ipsa subtilitas reddit.*] that is [*You compose copious words, and tye hard knots by curious questions, and you say, O these are acute things! what is more acute then the peal of corn? and yet what is it good for? subtilty it self makes some things unprofitable and uneffectual.*]

[*Ista ineptiæ Poetis relinquantur, quibus aures oblectare propositum est & dulcem fabulam ve-*

ctere:

dere: sed qui ingenia sanare, & fidem in rebus humanis retinere, ac memoriam officiorum animis ingerere volunt, serio loquantur, & magnis viribus rem agant;] that is, [*Leave these toyes or fooleries to Poets, whose business is to delight the ear, and to compose a pleasant fable. But they that mean to heal mens understandings, and retain credibility among men, and to bring into mens minds the remembrance of their duties, must speak seriously, and do their business with all their might.*]

Demens omnibus merito videret — *He would justly by all be taken for a mad man, that when the town expecteth to be stormed by the enemies, and others are busie at work for their defence, will sit idle proposing some curious*

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questions] —— *Nunquid tibi dementes videor, si istis impendere operam, & nunc obsideor? quid agam? mors me sequitur; vita fugit; adversus hæc me doce aliquid: effice ut ego mortem non timeam, & vita me non effugiat.*] [*And shall not I be taken for a mad man, If I should busie my self about such things that am now besieged? what shall I do? death pursueth me: life flyeth from me: teach me something against these: make death not dreadful to me, or life not to fly from me.*] *Si multum esset ætatis, parcè dispensandum erit ut sufficeret necessariis: nunc quæ dementia est supervacua discere in tanta temporis egestate!*] [*If we had much time, we should sparingly lay it out, that it might suffice for necessary things: But*

now

nem what a madneſs is it, to learn things needleſs or ſuperfluous in ſo great a ſcarcity of time!] [*Metire ergo ætatem tuam: tam multa non capit. Meaſure thy age: Its not enough for ſo many things.*] [*Relinque iſtum ludum literarum Philoſophis. Rem magnificam! ad ſyllabas vocant qui animum minuta diſcendo diminuunt & conterunt, & id agunt, ut Philoſophia potius difficilis quam magna videatur: Socrates, qui totam Philoſophiam revocavit ad mores, hanc ſummam dixit eſſe ſapientiam, bona malaque diſtinguere.*] [*Leave this learned play to Philoſophers: A gallant buſineſs! They call us to ſyllables; and debaſe, and depreſs the mind by learning ſuch little trivial things, and make Philoſophy rather to*

ſeem

seems a matter of difficulty when great. Socrates, *that revoked all Philosophy to manners, did call this the highest wisdom, to distinguish good and evil.*]

Did a *Seneca* see by the light of nature, so much of the necessity of *seriousness* and *diligence*, about the *matters of the soul*: and so much of the madness of spending *words* and *time* on *trifles*? And yet shall there be found a man among *professed Christians*, and among the *Preachers of Faith and Holiness*, that plead for *trifling*, and scorn at *seriousness*, and count them *moderate* and *wise* that a *Heathen* brands as *toyish* and *distracted*.

What is it that *cloudeth* the *glory of Christianity*, and keepeth so great a part of the world

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in Heathenism and Infidelity: but this, that *among Christians* there are so *few* that are *Christians indeed*: and those few are so obscured by the multitude of *formal trifling hypocrites*, that *Christianity* is *measured* and *judged* of by the *lives of those that are no Christians*: *Religion* is a thing to be *demonstrated* and *honoured* and *commended* by *practice*: *words alone* are ineffectual to represent its excellency to so *blind* a world, that must know by *feeling*, having lost their *sight*. In our *professed faith* we mount unto the Heavens, and leave poor unbelievers wallowing in the dirt. O what a transcendent, unconceivable glory, do we profess to expect with God unto eternity! And

what

what manner of persons should they be, in all holy conversation and godliness, that look for such a life as this? How basely should they esteem those transitory things, that are the food & felicity of the sensual world? How patiently should they undergo contempt and scorn, and whatsoever man can inflict upon them? How studiously should they devote and refer all their time, and strength, and wealth, and interest, to this their glorious blessed end? How seriously should they speak of, and how industriously should they seek, such sure, such near, such endless joyes? Did professed Christians more exactly conform their hearts and lives to their profession and

holy rule, their *lives* would confute the reproaches of their enemies, and command a reverent and awful estimation from the observers, and do more to convince the unbelieving world of the truth and dignity of the Christian faith, then all the words of the most subtile disputants. *Christianity* being an *effecting practical science*, must *practically* and *effectionally* be declared, according to its *nature*: *Arguments* do but paint it out: And *pictures* do no more make known its excellency, then the *picture* of *meat* and *drink* makes known its *sweetness*. When a *doctrine so holy* is *visibly exemplified*, and *liveth*, and *walketh*, and *worketh* in *serious Christians* before the world,

world. Either *this* or *nothing* will convince them and constrain them, to glorifie our Lord, and say, that *God is among us or in us of a truth*, Matth. 5. 16. 1 Cor. 14. 25. But it is *unchristian lives* that darkeneth the glory of the *Christian faith*. When men that profess such glorious hopes, shall be as sordidly earthly, and sensual, and ambitious, and impotent, and impatient as other men, they seem but fantastical dissemblers.

And yet shall there be found such a perfidious wretch under the heavens of God, as a *professed Minister of Christ*, that shall *subtilly* or *openly* labour to make an exact, and holy, and heavenly conversation a mat-

ter of *reproach* and *scorn*, and that under pretence of reproving the sins of *Hypocrites* and *Schismaticks*, shall make the exactest conformity to the Christian rule, and faithfullest obedience to the Almighty Sovereign, to seem to be but hypocrisie or self-conceitedness, or needless trouble, if not the way to sedition, and publick trouble, and turning all things upside down? that cannot reprove sin, without malicious insinuating slanders or suspitions against the holy law and holy life, that are most contrary to sin, as life to death, as health to sickness, and as light to darkness?

For *any man*, especially *any professed Christian*, *anywhere* to oppose

oppoſe or ſcorn at godlineſs, is a dreadful ſign, as well as a heinous ſin: But for a *Preacher of Godlineſs* to oppoſe and ſcorn at *Godlineſs*, and that in the *Pulpit*, while he pretendeth to promote it, and plead for it in the name of Chriſt, is a ſin that ſhould ſtrike the heart of man with horrour to conceive of.

Though I cannot ſubſcribe my ſelf to that paſſage in the ſecond part of the tenth Homily, *Tom.* 2. page 150. (however I very much love and honour the book of Homilies) yet for their ſakes that not only can ſubſcribe to it, but would have all kept out of the Miniſtry that cannot, and that take it for that Doctrine of the Church of *England* which they

will believe and Preach, I will recite it to the terror of the guilty, not to drive to despair, but to awake them or to shame them for their opposition to the wayes of godliness.

Expounding *Psal.* 1. 1. *Blessed is the man that hath not walked after the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful*] having shewed who are the [*ungodly*] and [*the sinners*] it addeth these words.

"[*The third sort he calleth*
"*scorners*; that is, a sort of men
"whose hearts are so stuffed
"with malice, that they are
"not contented to dwell in sin,
"and to lead their lives in all
"kind of wickedness, but also
"they do contemn and scorn

"in others all godlineſs, true
"Religion, all honeſty and
"vertue. Of the two firſt
"ſorts of men, I will not ſay,
"but they may take Repen-
"tance, and be converted
"unto God. Of the third
"ſort, I think I may without
"danger of Gods judgement
"pronounce, that never any
"yet were converted into God
"by Repentance, but continued
"ſtill in their abominable
"wickedneſs, heaping up to
"themſelves damnation, againſt
"the day of Gods inevitable
"judgement.

Though I dare not ſay but *ſome* ſuch have Repented, yet let the ſcorners that believe this, remember, that they ſubſcribe the ſentence of their own condemnation.

Though I look upon this sort of the enemies of Holiness as those that are as unlikely to be recovered and saved, as almost any people in the world, except *Apostates* and *Malicious Blasphemers* of the *Holy Ghost*; yet in compassion to the people and themselves, I shall plead the cause of God with their consciences, and try what Light can do with their understandings, and the terrours of the Lord with their hardened hearts.

1. *A Preacher of the Gospel should much excell the people in understanding*: And therefore this sin is *greater* in them then other men: what *means*, what *light* do *they* sin against? Either thou *knowest* the *Necessity* of *striving*

striving for salvation with the greatest diligence, or thou *dost not*. If *not*, what a sin & shame is it to undertake the sacred Office of the Ministrie, while thou knowest not the things that are *necessary to salvation*, and that which every *Infant in the faith* doth know? But if thou *dost know it*, how dost thou make shift maliciously to oppose it, without feeling the beginnings of Hell upon thy Conscience? When it is thy *work* to *read* the *Scriptures*, and meditate on them, dost thou not read thy doom, and meditate terrour? How canst thou choose but perceive that the scope of the word of God is contrary to the bent of thy affections and suggestions? Yea

what is more evident by the *Light of Nature*, then that God and our salvation cannot be regarded with too much holy seriousness, exactness and industry? Should not the *best things* be *best loved*? and the *greatest matters* have our *greatest care*? And is there any thing to be compared with God and our eternal state? O what *overwhelming* subjects are these to a sober and considerate *mind*! what toys are all things in comparison of them! And yet dost thou *make light* of them, and also *teach men so to do*! As if there were something else that better deserved mens greatest care and diligence then they. What, a *Preacher*, and not a *Believer*! Or a *Believer*, and

yet

yet not see enough in the matters of *Eternity* to engage all our powers of soul and body against all the world that should stand in competition?

2. *Is it not sinful and terrible enough, to be thy self in a carnal unrenewed state?* (Rom. 8. 13.) and to be without the Spirit and life of Christ (v. 9.) but thou must be so cruel as to *make others* miserable also? (Psal. 50. 16, 17. [*But to the wicked saith God, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes? or that thou shouldest take my Covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee?*] Matth. 5. 19. *Whosoever shall break one of these least Commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least*

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in the Kingdom of Heaven: But whosoever shall do and teach the same, shall be called Great in the Kingdom of heaven.]

3. What an aggravation is it of thy impietie and soul-murder, that *thou art bound by office to teach men that life of holiness which thou oppossest*, and to perswade them to that with all thy Might, which thou endeavoureſt closely and cunningly to disgrace! And wilt thou be a *traytor* to Christ in the name of a *Messenger*, and Preacher of the Gospel? Wilt thou engage thy self to promote his intereſt, and to use all thy skill and power to build men up in holiness and obedience; and when thou haſt done this, wilt thou disgrace and hinder it?

Doſt

Doſt thou take on thee to go on the meſſage of Chriſt, and then ſpeak againſt him? We do not find that *Judas* dealt thus with him: when he ſent him as he did other Preachers, we read not that he preacht againſt him. O let not my ſoul be numbred with ſuch men in the day of the Lord! It will be eaſier for *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, then for the *refuſers* of the Word and Grace of Chriſt. What then will be the doom of the *oppoſers*? And above all of *thoſe treacherous oppoſers*, that pretend themſelves to propagate and promote them.

If the wit and malice of Satans inſtruments were ſharpened againſt the wayes and ſervants of the Lord, it belongs

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to you to *plead Christs cause*, and shame these absurd unreasonable gain-sayers, and stop the mouth of impious contradiction: And will *you joyn* with the gainsayers, and secretly or openly say as they? Who should *confound* the *deriders* of a holy life but you? Who should lay open the excellencies of Christ, the glory of heaven, the terrors of the Lord, and all other obligations to the most serious Religiousness, but *you* that have undertaken it as your calling and employment? If any man in the Parish were so Atheistical and brutish, as to think God unworthy of our dearest Love, our most exact obedience, and most laborious service, who should display this

Atheists

Atheists folly, but you that are doubly (as Christians, and as Ministers) obliged to defend the honour of your Lord? If any of the *people* should fall into such a dream or dotage, as to question the Necessitie of our utmost diligence in our preparations for eternal life, who should awake them by lifting up their voices as a trumpet, and help to recover their understandings but *you* that are the watchmen, and know their blood will be required at your hands, if you give them not loud and timely warning? If any subtil malicious servant of the Devil, should plead against the Necessitie of Holiness, and dissuade the people from serving God with all their might, who should be rea-

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dy to confirm the weak, and ſtrengthen and encourage them that are thus aſſaulted, and help to keep up their zeal and forwardneſs, but you that are *Leaders* in the *Army* of the Lord? Is it not a *Holy God* that you are engaged to ſerve? And a *Holy Church* in which you have your ſtation? And a *Communion of Saints* in which you have undertaken to adminiſter the *Holy things of God*? Have you not read what was done to *Nadab* and *Abihu*, when *Moſes* told *Aaron* [*This is it that the Lord ſpake, ſaying, I will be ſanctified in them that come nigh me, and before the people I will be glorified*] Lev. 10. 3. Is it not a *Holy Law & Goſpel* which you publiſh? You have undertaken

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to warn the slothful, the sensual, the worldly, and the prophane, *that they strive to enter in at the strait gate, and seek first the kingdome of God and his Righteousnes*, Luke 1. 13. Mat. 6. 33. *and to give diligence to make sure their calling and election*, 2 Pet. 1. 10. *and to give all diligence in adding vertue to their faith, &c.* 2 Pet. 1. 5. *and with all diligence to keep their hearts*, Prov. 4. 23. And are *you* the men that would *quench* their zeal, and *destroy* the *holy diligence* which you should *preach*? The Lord touch your hearts, and recover you in time, or how woful will it be with such *hardened Hypocrites*, that in the *Light*, and *in his family and livery*, and under his standard and colours dare prove traitors.

traitors and enemies to the Lord?

4. And what an addition is it to your guilt, that *you speak against God in his own name?* By *Office* you are to deliver his *message*, and speak to the people *in his Name*, and *in his stead*, 2 Cor. 5. 19, 20. And dare you before the Sun, and under the Heavens of God, and in his hearing, perswade men that the *most Holy God is against Holiness?* and the *King of Saints* is an *adversary to sanctity?* and that he that *made* his *holy Law*, is against the *most exact obeying* of it? Dare you prefix a [*Thus saith the Lord*] to so impious a speech as [*It is in vain to serve the Lord? what needs there so much ado for your salvation?* Dare you go

to

to men as from the Lord, and say [*You are too careful and diligent in his service! Less ado may serve the turn! What need this fervour, and redeeming time! This is but Puritanism or Preciseness. Its better do as the most, and venture your souls without so much ado.*] Who could at last hold up his face, or stand before the dreadful Tribunal, that should be found in the guilt of such a crime! What, to put *God* into the similitude of *Satan*, and describe the *most Holy* as the *enemy of Holiness*! and make him plead *against himself*, and disgrace his own Image, and *dissuade* men from that which *he himself* hath made of *necessity* to their salvation! What viler Blasphemie can be uttered!

5. And

5. And it aggravateth your sin, that your *Relation obligeth you to the most tender affections to your people*: And yet that *you* should seduce them to *damnation*. For the *Nurse to poyson* them; for the *parents* to cut the *childrens throats*, is worse then for an *enemy* to do it. If the *Devil* our professed enemie should himself appear to us, and say [*Prepare not so seriously for death: Be not so strict, and diligent, and holy*] it were not, in many respects, *so bad*, as for *you* to do it; that should help to save us from his snares. You that profess your selves our Fathers! that should travail in birth till Christ be formed in your peoples hearts! that should love your people as your

own

own bowels, and tender the weak, and pity the wicked, and ſtick at no labour, ſuffering or coſt, that might advance their holineſs, and further their ſalvation; For *you* to tempt men into a *careleſs life*, and turn them out of the holy way, is an aggravated cruelty. Its worſe for the ſhepherd to deſtroy us then the wolf. Read *Ezek.* 34. & 33.

6. *Are you not aſhamed thus to contradict your ſelves?* What can you find to *preach* from the *word of God*, that tendeth not to this *holy diligence* which you are againſt? How can you make ſhift to preach an hour, and not acquaint men with the *Duty* and *Neceſſity* of *ſeeking God with all their Might*? Do you not tell

tell them, that *except they be converted and new born, they shall not enter into the Kingdom of God*, John 3. 3, 5. Matth. 18. 3. And *that without holiness none shall see the Lord*, Heb. 12. 14. And *that if they live after the flesh, they shall die*, Rom. 8. 13. And *that except their righteousness exceed the righteousness of Scribes and Pharisees, they shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*, Mat. 5. 20. And will you in your *Application*, or *private discourses*, unsay all this again, and give God and your selves the *lye*? And let people see, that the Pulpit is to you but as a Stage, and that you believe not what you speake upon.

7. Consider, that your *place and calling, maketh you the most* suc-

successful servants of the devil, and so the most bloody murderers of souls, while *you* give your judgement against a strict and heavenly life. For a *drunkard in an Alehouse* to mock the Minister, and rail at serious Religion, is less regarded by sober men, and small advantage to his masters cause: nay the wickedness of his life, is so great a shame to his judgement, that it inclineth many to think well of those that *he* speaks against. But when a man that pretendeth to *learning* and *understanding*, and to be himself a *Pastor* of the Church, and *Preacher* of the mysteries of Christ, shall make them odious that are most careful for their souls, and most exact in pleasing

God

God, and shall make all *serious diligence* for heaven to seem but *intemperate zeal* and *self-conceitedness*; and shall describe a Saint as if the formal lifeless Hypocrite, that giveth God but the leavings of the world, and never set his heart on heaven, were indeed the man; what a snare is here for the perdition of the ignorant! They that are naturally averse from holiness, and are easily perswaded to think that to be unnecessary or bad, which seems so much above them and against them, will be much confirmed in their mistakes and misery, when they hear their *Teachers* speak *without them*, the same that *Satan* by his suggestions doth *within them*. This turneth a *trembling sinner*,

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into a *hardened scorner*: he that before went under the daily correction of his conscience, for neglecting God, and omitting holy duties, and living to the flesh, grows bold and fearless, when he hears the *Preacher* disgrace the stricter purer way. By that time he hath heard a while the *fear of God* derided as *preciseness*, and a tender conscience reproached as a *scrupulous foolish thing*, his conscience grows more plyable to his lusts, and hath little more to say against them. When Gods own professed Ministers that should be wiser and better then the people, are *against this zeal* and industry for heaven, the people will soon think, that at least it is *tolerable* in them: And they

will sooner learn to *deride a Saint* from a *Sermon*, or discourse of a *Preacher* or a *learned man*, then from the *scorns* or *talk* of *hundreds* of the *ignorant*. And wilt thou *teach* them to *hate godliness*, who hast undertaken before the righteous God, to *teach* them to *practice* it? He that *dispraiseth* it, though under other names, and representeth it as odious, though masked with the title of some odious vice, doth indeed endeavour to make men *hate* it. And what a terrible account wilt thou have to make, when the seduction and transgression of all these sinners shall be charged upon thee? When Christ shall say to the haters, deriders and opposers of his

holy

holy wayes and servants [*In as much as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it unto me.*] How durst you scorn the image of your Maker? and hate the *Saints* whose *Communion* you professed to *believe*, and deride or oppose that *serious holiness*, without which you had no hope of being saved? If then the sinners become your accusers, and say, [*Lord, we thought it had been but unnecessary preciseness, and that serious Christians had been but self-conceited factious hypocrites, and that lip service with a common worldly life might have served the turn; we heard our Preachers represent such strict and Zealous men, as turbulent, seditious, and refractory, as odious and not as*

Venitable: Their application was against them: Their discourse derided them: Of them we learnt it. We thought they were wiser and better then we: Of whom should we learn but of our teachers!] Wo to the Teachers that ever they were born, that must be then found guilty of this crime.

If *Adam's* excuse was *Eve's* accusation, [*The woman which thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat*] And the *womans* excuse did charge the Serpent [*The Serpent beguiled me and I did eat*] Gen. 3. 12, 13. (though it freed not the excusers;) How will it load *you*, when your people shall say [*The Teachers that we thought thou gavest us, did teach*

us and go before us in setting against this holy diligence; and we did but learn of them, and follow them.

8. *Are not the people backward enough to the serving of God with all their might, unless you hinder them?* Is not the corrupted heart of lapsed man *averse enough* to the matters of salvation, but you must make them worse? If you had to do with the best and holiest person in the world, that walketh with God in the most heavenly conversation, he would tell you that his dull and backward heart hath no need of *clogs*, and pull-backs, and discouragements, but of all the help that can be afforded him, to quicken

him up to greater diligence. The *most zealous* lament that they are *so cold*: The *most heavenly* lament that they are *so earthly*, and so *strange to heaven*: The most *laborious* lament that they are so *sloathful*; and the *fruitfullest* believers that they are so *unprofitable*; and those that are most *watchful* of their words and deeds, that they are so *careless*; and those that most diligently redeem their time, lament it that they lose so much; and those that walk most *accurately* and *exactly*, that they are so *loose*, and keep no closer to the Rule. And yet dareſt thou increaſe the backwardneſs of the *ungodly*! will not their *carnal intereſts and luſts* ſerve turn to keep them from

from a *holy life*? Is not *Satan* ſtrong enough of himſelf? will not the *common diſtaſte* of *Godlineſs* in the world, ſufficiently prejudice and avert them without *thy helps*? Do you ſee your people ſo *forward to do too much* for Heaven, that you muſt pull them back? Cannot ſouls be *damned* without your *furtherance*? or is it a *deſireable work*? and will it *pay* you for your coſt and labour? The way is uphill: The beſt of us are weak, and frequently ready to ſit down! A thouſand impediments are caſt before us by Satan and the world, to make us linger till the time be paſt; and many a charm of pleaſure and diverſion to make us ſleep till the door be ſhut. And *Miniſters*

nisters are sent to keep us *waking*, and take us by the hand, and lead us on, and remove impediments: and shall they set in with the enemie, and be our chiefest hinderers? O treacherous guides! O miserable helps! Are not our dark understandings, our earthly, dull and backward hearts, our passions and troubled affections, our appetites and sensual inclinations, our natural strangeness and averseness to God, and heaven, and holiness, enough to hinder us *without you?* Are not all the temptations of the Devil, the allurements of the flesh, and world, the impediments of poverty and riches, of flattery and of frowns, of friends and foes, in our callings and in our di-

divertiſements, are not *all theſe* enough to cool and dull us, and keep us from ſerving God *too much*, and being *too careful* and *diligent* for our ſouls, but *Preachers* themſelves muſt be our *impediments and ſnares*? Now the Lord deliver our ſouls from ſuch impediments, and his Church from ſuch unfaithful guides!

9. *Conſider whom thou imitateſt in this.* Is it Chriſt or Satan? Chriſt calleth men to *ſtrive*, to *labour*, to *ſeek firſt*, to *watch*, to *pray always*, and *not wax faint*, Luke 12.24. John 6. 27. Mat. 6. 33. & 25. 13. Luke 18. 1. The Apoſtles call men to be [*fervent in ſpirit, ſerving the Lord; to be a peculiar people, zealous of good works;*

to pray continually; to be a chosen generation, a royal Priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people to shew forth the praises of him that hath called us, and offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. 2.5.9. 1 Thess. 5.17. Tit. 2.14. Rom. 12.11. *To fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold upon eternal life*, 1 Tim. 6.12. *To serve God acceptably (being as a consuming fire) with reverence and godly fear*, Heb. 12.28, 29. *To be stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord*, 1 Cor. 15.58.] And dare you gainsay the Lord and his Apostles, and concur with Satan, and the *Pharisees and enemies of Christ?*

10. *You do your worst to make the sacred office of the Ministry to become contemptible*, as *Eli's* sons did: Poor people that cannot sufficiently distinguish the *Doctrine* from the *Application*, the *office* from the *person*, the *use* from the *abuse*, will be tempted to run from the ordinances of God; and think the worse of *others* for *your sakes*, and suspect *all their food*, because *you* mix such poyson in it. And the more Holy and Necessary the office and work is, the greater is your sin in corrupting it, or making it suspected or abhor'd.

Consider soberly of these things, and then go on and speak against a *Life of Holy diligence* if you *dare*.

I know

I know you'l say, *It is not Godliness, but singularity, or humour, or disobedience, or hypocrisie, or faction, that you oppose:* and perhaps you'l instance in some that are guilty of some of these, or seem so at the least.

But 1. I do here solemnly profess that I hate these crimes as well as you; and that it is not any part of my intention to plead for *intemperance, disobedience in lawful things*, for *schisms*, or *faction*, or any *irregularity*: And this I here put in against those that are disposed to misunderstand and misreport us, and leave it as *on record* to prove them slanderers, that shall accuse me of defending *any such thing*. And I do protest against those on the other

other side, that will fetch encouragement for any transgression from my necessary plea for the *holy industry* and *vigilancy* of believers. And moreover, I do profess that it *is only the opposers of Holiness that I mean in this Defence*, and *have not the least intent to intimate that any others are guilty of that crime that are not*. But having premised this protestation to prevent mistakes and false reports, I answer now to the guilty.

2. If it be *crimes* only that you are against, deliver your self so, as may not lay reproach or suspicion *on Godliness*, which is *most opposite* to *all crimes*: Cannot you preach against *Divisions*, *disobedience*, or any other *sin*, without any scornful

in

intimations or reflections against mens *diligent serving of the Lord?*

3. Why do not you *commend those* that are *not liable* to your accusations, and encourage them in *holiness*, and draw others to imitate them? And why do you not commend the *Good* where you discommend the *evil* that is commixt.

4. Shall *Health* and *Life* be made a scorn, because there are few but have some *distemper* or *disease?* Shall *Christianity* and *Holiness* be secretly reproached, because *all Christians* have *some* fault to be accused of? If men be *faulty*, you should perswade them to be *more strict* and *diligent*, and not *less*: It is for want of watchfulness and strict-

ness

nefs that they *sin*. Nothing is more contrary to their *faults*, then *Holineſs*. There is no other way for their full reformation. And therefore all true humbled Chriſtians are ready to confeſs their *faultineſs* themſelves; but ſo far are they from thinking the worſe of *piety* for it, that its one great reaſon that moveth them to go on, and to read, and hear, and pray, and meditate, and do ſo much that they may get more ſtrength againſt their *faults*. Muſt they think ill of *food*, and *phyſick*, and *exerciſe*, becauſe they are *infirm*? *All* faithful Miniſters tell their people plainly of their *ſins* (ſo far as they are acquainted with them) as well as you: But they do it not in a way reproachful

proachful to their holy diligence: They do not therefore call them off from *Godliness*, nor tempt them to be less in the use of means, but *more*, by how much their need is greater. A *holy heart*, and a *malignant heart*, will shew their difference in the reproving of the *same faults*. The one layeth all the *odium* on the *vice*, & honoureth the *holy obedience* of the Saints. The other fasteneth his sting upon the *Godly*, and under pretence of dishonouring their *faults*, doth seek to fasten the dishonour on their *holiness*. And those that are so *minded*, will never want *occasion* or *pretence*, for the worst that Satan would have them say. The Church will never be without *some hypocrites*

pocrites, and *ſcandals*, nor the *beſt* without *ſome faults* and *paſſions*; nor the *holieſt* action without ſome mixture of *humane frailty* and infirmitie; nor will the very *goodneſs* and *holineſs* of the action, be free from plauſible calumnies and ſcorns, while there is the *wit* and *venom* of the ſerpent in the *heads* and *hearts* of wicked men.

How eaſie is it to put a name of ignominie upon every perſon, and every durie? To charge any man with Hypocriſie, or Pride? To take the wiſeſt man for *ſelf-conceited*, becauſe he is not of the accuſers mind? To call our *obedience to God*, by the name of *diſobedience unto man*, when man forbids it, as they uſed the three witneſ-

ſes,

ſes, *Dan.* 3. and *Daniel* himſelf for praying in his houſe, *Dan.* 6. though they confeſſed they had *nothing elſe againſt him*? To call *Gods Truth* by the name of *Hereſie*, and *Hereſie* by the name of *Truth*? To charge all with *Schiſm* that dare not ſubject their ſouls to the uſurpation and arrogant impoſitions of the ſons of Pride, that have neither Authoritie nor Abilitie to Govern us, as the Papiſts deal by the greateſt part of the Chriſtian world? To *lay ſnares* for mens Conſciences, and then accuſe them for *falling into thoſe* ſnares? To make *new Articles of faith*, till they have tranſcended the capacitie of *Divine* and *Rational belief*, and then *condemn us* for not believing them? To

make

make *Laws* for the Church, *unnecessary* in their own opinion, and *sinful* in other mens, and command things which they know that others think the Lord forbids, and then load them with the sufferings and reproaches of the *disobedient, turbulent, heretical, schismatical*, or *seditious*? To call men *factious*, if they will not be of *their faction*? and *Sectaries*, if they will not unreasonably subject their *souls to them*, and joyn with an *imperious Sect* against the *Catholick Unity* and *Simplicity*? All which the *Romanists* practise upon the Church of Christ. How *easie*, but how *unreasonable*, and yet how *irresistible* is all this? How easie is it to call a *meeting of sober Christians*

stians, for prayer and mutual edification, such as that was *Acts* 12.12. by the name of a *factious schismatical Conventicle*, and a meeting of *Drunkards*, or *Gamesters*, by a more gentle less disgraceful name? To say a man becomes a *Preacher*, when he modestly reproveth another for his sins, or charitably exhorteth him in order to his salvation, or giveth any necessary plain instruction to his *family*, for whom he must give account? Believe it, it will be a poor excuse to any man, that becomes an enemie to the diligence of a Saint, that he could *thus cloak his malice*, and *cloath a Saint* with the *vizor* of an *Hypocrite*, and the rags of any *odious Sect*.

If the *Pharisees* were to be believed,

believed, it was *not they*, but *Christ* that was the *Hypocrite*: nor was it the *Son of God*, but an *Enemy to Cæsar*, and a *Blasphemer* that they *put to death*. But will not Christ *know his sheep*, though he find them *torn* in a *wolfs skin*? You say it is *turbulent Precisians* that you strike; but what if Christ find but *one of the least of his Brethren bleeding* by it? It is but *Hypocrites* or *Schismaticks* that you *reproach*; but if Christ find an *humble serious Christian suffering* by your abuse, and you to answer it, I would not be in your coats for all the greatness and honour that you shall have before your everlasting shame. If *Tertullus* accuse a *pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition*, and Christ

Christ find an *holy laborious Apostle in bonds and suffering by it*, it is not his *names* that will excuse him, and make an *Apostle*, or *persecution* to be another thing.

TO return to the *endangered flocks*: Look upward, first, and think whether *Heaven* be worth your labour! Look downwards, and think whether *Earth be more worthy* of it! Lay up your *treasure* where you must *dwell for ever*. If that be *here*, then scrape, and flatter, and get all that you can: But if it be not *here*, but in *another life*, then hearken to your Lord, and *lay up for your selves treasure in heaven*, and there for your

your very hearts be set, Matth. 6. 20,21. And upon the peril of *everlasting misery*, hearken not to *any man* that will tempt you from a *diligent holy life*. Its a *serious business*, deal *seriously* in it; and be not *laught* or *mockt* out of *Heaven*, by the flouts of a distracted sensual Atheist. If any of them will pretend to sobrietie and wisdom, and undertake to prove that *God should not be Loved and served*, and *your salvation sought with all your Might*, and with greater care and diligence then any earthly thing, procure me a sober conference with *that man*, and try whether I shall not prove him to be a befooled servant of the Devil, and a mischievous enemie of your salvation and his

own,

own. O that we might have but *ſober debates*, inſtead of *jeers*, and *ſcorns*, and *railing*, with this ſort of men! How quickly ſhould we ſhew you, that they muſt renounce the *Scripture*, and renounce *Chriſtianity*, and (if that be nothing with them) that they muſt renounce *God*, and renounce *right Reaſon*, and *unman* themſelves, if they will renounce a *holy Heavenly life*, and blame them that make it their *principal buſineſs* in the world to prepare for the world to come.

But if they will not be intreated to ſuch a *ſober conference*, will you that hear them, (if you care what becomes of you) but *come to us*, and hear what *we can ſay* for a *Holy life*,

before

before you hearken to them; and let your souls have fair play, and shew that you have so much love to your selves, as not to cast away salvation at the derision of a fool, before you have heard the other side.

If I make not good the *strictest Lawes* of God Almighty, against the most *subtil cavills* of any of the instruments of Satan, then tell me that *Infidels* or *Epicures* are in the right. Compare their words with the words of God. Consider well but that one Text, 2 *Pet.* 3. 11. and tell me whether it suit with their opinions [*Seeing all these things must be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all manner of holy Conversation and Godliness; looking for and hasting*

to the coming of the day of God.] Did these words but sink into your hearts, the next time you heard any man reproach a *Holy heavenly life*, it would perhaps make you think of the words of *Paul* to such another, *Acts* 13.10. [*O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the Devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?*]

And if *Holiness* be evil spoken of by them that never tried it, what wonder! Christ hath forerold us that it *must be so*, Matth. 5. 11, 12. *Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsly for my sake. Rejoyce and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven:*

heaven: for so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you.] John 15. 19, 20. [*If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you, &c.*] 1 Pet. 4. 4, 5, 14. *They think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you, who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and dead — If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye: for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: On their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.*] Seneca himself oft telleth us, that among the *Heathen Vertue* was a derision, so far is the nature

of man degenerated. The question is not what you are *called* or *taken* to be, but what *you are*. [*Intus teipsum considera* (*inquit* Sen.) *non qualis sis aliis credas*; *Plerunque boni inepti & inertes vocantur. Mihi contingat iste derisus: Æquo animo audienda sunt imperitorum convitia*; *& ad honesta vadendi contemnendus est iste contemptus.*] that is [*Inwardly consider of thy self, and judge not what thou art by the words of others: For the most part Good men are call'd fools and dullards: Let me be so derided: The reproaches of the ignorant (or unskilful) must be patiently heard; and his contempt of one that followeth vertue, must be contemned.*] Yea it is the highest honour to be content to

be

be *accounted bad*, that we may *not be so*; and the greatest trial whether we be indeed *sincere*, to be put to it; to be either *accounted Hypocrites*, or *to be such*. Me thinks I can scarce too oft recite that excellent saying of *Seneca*, *Epist.* 72. *Nemo plus videtur æstimare virtutem, nemo magis illi esse devotus, quam qui boni viri famam perdidit, ne conscientiam perderet.*] that is [*No man seems to set a higher price on vertue; no man seems to be more devoted to it, then he that hath lost the Reputation of being a good man, lest he should lose his conscience.*]

But perhaps you'l ask, *May not a man be righteous overmuch?* as is intimated, *Eccl.* 7. 16.

I answer, It is *making a mans*

ſelf overwiſe or righteous, that is there reproved. And no doubt but 1. many *take on* them, or *make themſelves* more wiſe and righteous then they are: that is, *are Hypocrites*. 2. As *Righteouſneſs* is taken *materially* and in common eſtimation, ſo a man may be *too Righteous*. He may be *too rigorous*, which is called *Juſtice*; and too much in grief, or fear, or trouble, and too much in any outward act that goeth under the *name* of *duty*. But it is not then truly and formally *duty* and *righteouſneſs*, but *ſin*. As to faſt to the diſabling the body for Gods ſervice. To *pray* when we ſhould *hear*: To *hear* when we ſhould be about ſome *greater work* of *Mercy* or *neceſſity*: To neglect

neglect our *outward labour* and calling on *pretence* of *Religion*: To set up *sacrifice against* or *before mercy*: To *Sorrow* when we should *Rejoyce*: To *meditate*, and *fear*, and *grieve*, beyond what the *brain can bear*, till it distract us: This is called, *being Righteous overmuch*: As also to *make us a Religion* of our *own Inventions*, and to *over-do* with *will-worship* and the *traditions* of men, as the Pharisees and Papists. But indeed this is not *Righteousness*, but *sin*: To be *formally overmuch righteous*, is a contradiction, and impossible. For to go *beyond* the *Rule* is *unrighteousness*: And to do *too much*, is to go beyond the *Rule*. Unless you dare imagine that *God* hath erred, and the

Rule it ſelf is overſtrict, and the *Law* is unrighteous: But then *how ſhall God judge the world?* ſaith the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 3. 6. *Shall not the Judge of all the world do righteouſly?* Gen. 18. 25. Nay how then ſhould he *be God?*

And is there any thing now left but *Ignorance* or *Wickedneſs* to ſtand up againſt thy ſpeedy diligence? Away then with thy *delays* and *ſloathfulneſs*. If thou *wilt* ſerve God *with all thy might*, let it be ſeen; If thou *wilt* be a *Chriſtian indeed*, let *deeds* declare it. *Chriſtianity* is not a dead Opinion. If really thou live in hope of heaven, ſuch hopes will make thee *ſtir* for the attainment. Why ſtandeſt thou *idle*, when thou art born for

work,

work, and all thy faculties are given thee for *work*, and thou art Redeemed for *work*? (for *Evangelical work.*) If thou be *sanctified*, thou hast the *Spirit of Christ*, a quickening working principle within thee; which way canst thou look, but thou mayst see that which would shame a sloathful soul, and fire a cold and frozen heart, and call thee up to speedy industry? what *quickening* words shalt thou finde in *Scripture*, if thou wilt but bring thy heart thither as one that is *willing* to be *quickened*? what *powerful commands*, what *promises*, what *threatnings*, what *holy examples* of exceeding diligence of Christ and his Apostles? See how the Godly about thee are *at work*, though

the world *oppose* them and *deride* them! how *earnestly* they pray! how *carefully* they walk! how sadly they complain that they are *no better*! And hast *thou not* an immortal soul to save or lose as well as *they*? See what a stir the *proud ambitious* person makes for less then nothing? what a stir the *covetous* and the *voluptuous* make for a sweetned draught of mortal poyson? And shall we be *idle* that are engaged for *Heaven*? Is it reason that we should *do less* for *God* and our *salvation*, then *they* do for *sinful pleasure* to *damnation*? You cannot *mock them* out of their *Pride* or *Covetousness*: And shall *they mock thee* out of thy *Religion*, and thy *hopes of Heaven*? All the commands,

mands, and promises, and threatnings of God, the most powerful preaching, that, as it were, sets open Heaven and Hell to them, doth not prevail with fleshly men, to leave the most sordid and unmanly sin: And shall the words or frowns of creeping dust prevail with thee against the work for which thou livest in the world, when thou hast still at *hand unanswerable arguments* from *God*, from thy *self*, from *Heaven* and *Hell*, to put thee on? Were it but for thy *Life*, or the *Life* of thy children, friend, yea or enemie, or for the quenching of a fire in thy house, or in the Town, wouldst thou not stir and do thy best? And wilt thou be idle when eternal life lies on it? Let

Satan

Satan bawl against thee by his instruments. Let senseless sinners talk a while of they know not what, till God have made them change their note. Let what will be the consequent to thy flesh. These are not matters for a man much to observe, that is engaged for an *endless life*. O what are these to the things that thou art called to prosecute! Hold on then Christians in the work that you have begun. Do it *prudently*, and do it *universally*. Take it *together*, both works of *Piety*, *Justice*, and *Charity*: But do it *Now* without delay, and do it *seriously* with your *might*. I know not what cloud of darkness hath seized on those mens minds that speak against this;

or

at what deadly damp hath seized on their hearts, that hath so benummed & unmanned them. For my own part, though I have long lived in a sense of the preciousness of time, and have not been wholly idle in the world; yet when I have the deepest thoughts of the great everlasting Consequents of my work, and of the uncertainty and shortness of my Time, I am even amazed to think that my heart can be so slow and senseless, as to *do no more in such a case*. The Lord knows, and my accusing wounded Conscience knows, that my loathfulness is so much my shame and admiration, that I am astonished to think that my *Resolutions* are no *stronger*, my *affections* no

livelier

liveliest, and my *labour* and *diligence* no *greater*, when *God* is the *Commander*, and *his Love* the encourager, and his *wrath* the spur, and *Heaven* or *Hell* must be the issue. O what lives should all of us live, that have things of such unspeakable consequence on our hands, if our hearts were not almost dead within us! Let who will speak against such a Life, it shall be my daily grief and moan, that I am *so dull*, and do *so little*. I know that our works do not profit the Almighty, nor bear any proportion with his reward; nor can they stand in his sight, but as accepted in the Lord our Righteousness, & perfumed by the odour of his merits. But I know they are

Necessary

Neceſſary, and they are *ſweet*. Without the Holy imployment of our faculties, *this Life* will be but a *burden* or a *dream*, and the *next* an *unexpreſſible miſery*. O therefore that I had more of the Love of God, that my ſoul could get but neerer to him, and ſwiftlier move upward by Faith and Love! O that I had more of that Holy Life, and active diligence, which the ſerpentine *Cainiſh* nature doth abhor, though I had with it the ſcorns of all about me, and though they made me as they once did better men, as the filth of the world, and the offſcowring of all things! 1 *Cor.* 14 13. O that I had more of this *denided diligence*, and holy converſe with the Lord, though my

my name were cast out as an evil doer, *Luke* 6. 22. and I were spit at and buffetted by those that do now but secretly reproach! Might I neerly follow Christ in Holiness, why should I grudge to bear his Cross, and to be used as he was used? *Mat.* 26. 67. *Luke* 18. 32. knowing that *if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him:* and *the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us*, Rom. 8. 17, 18.

If when we have done all, we are but *unprofitable servants*, and must say, we *have done but our duty*, Luke 17. 10. have we not all more need of monitors to humble us for doing so much less then our

duty,

duty, then to be reprehended for being too diligent and exact?

I again proteſt, that it is not any works of ſupererogation, or humane invention, ſuperſtition, or ſelf appointment that I am defending, but only the accurate obeying of the Laws of God, and the utmoſt diligence in ſuch obedience, for the obtaining of everlaſting life. Either God hath commanded theſe works of Holineſs, Juſtice, and Charity, or not. If he *have not*, then I have done, and yield the cauſe: It is only *what he hath commanded* that I plead for. O that before you either ſpeak againſt any *Holy duty*, or your ſelves neglect it, you would but come to us, and

ſoberly

soberly joyn in *searching* the *Holy Scriptures*, to see whether it be required *there* or *not*; and resolve but to obey it, if we prove it thence: and if it be but a matter of humane imposition, we leave you to your selves, and should desire that you may be much left to your liberty in such things; and that you place not too much of your Religion therein. But if indeed it be *commanded in the word of God*, I beseech you, as you are *Christians*, and as you are *Men*, remember that whenever you blame or scorn a *holy duty*, it is *God himself* that you *blame* or *scorn*. If it be *naught*, it is long of him that did *command it*: The *subject must obey*; should not such worms as we obey the infinite

infinite God that made us? If it be a *fault to obey*, it is a *duty to rebel*, or *disobey*; and that must be because that God hath *no authority to command*, and that must be because he *is not God*. See whither you bring your opposition to a *holy life*; And dare you stand to this? Dare you as openly *mock God* for *making these strict* and *holy Lawes*, as you do *men* for *obeying* them? None but a professed Atheist dare.

Alas sirs, it is nothing but *intoxicating prosperity*, and *sensual delights*, and *worldly diversions*, that turn your brains, and leave you not the sober use of Reason, that makes you think well of *ungodly loathsomness*, and makes you think so contemptuously

ptuously or senslesly of a *heavenly life*. I tell you (and remember another day that you were told of it) that there is not the boldest Infidel in the world, nor the bitterest enemy to *holiness* in this Assembly, but shortly would wish they had rather been Saints in rags, with all the scorn and cruelty that malice can inflict on such, then to have braved it out in pride and gallantry, with the neglect of the great everlasting things. I tell you again, there is not an ungodly wretch that heareth me, but ere long would give a world if he were owner of a holy heart and life, that he had spent his days in holy watchful preparations for his change, which he spent for that which

will

will deceive him and forsake him.

Me thinks I even see how you will passionately rage against your selves, and tear your hearts with self-revenge, (if grace prevent it not by a more safe repentance) when you think too late how you liv'd on earth, and what golden times of grace you lost, and vilified all that would not lose them as foolishly as you. If Repentance unto life made *Paul* so call himself (*foolish, disobedient, deceived, and exceeding mad*, Tit. 3. 3. Acts 26. 11.) you may imagine how *tormenting Repentance* will make you *call your selves* too late.

O Sirs, you cannot now conceive, while you sit here in health,

health, and eaſe, and honour, what different thoughts will *then* poſſeſs you of a holy and an unholy life! How mad you will think them that had but *one lifes time* of *preparation* for *eternal life*, and deſperately neglected it! And how ſenſible you will *then* be of the *wiſdom* of *Believers*, that *knew* their *Time*, and *uſed* it while they had it! *Now wiſdom is juſtified of all her children:* but *then* how ſenſibly will it be juſtified of all its *enemies!* O with what gripes will undone ſouls look back on a life of mercy and opportunities, thus baſely undervalued, and ſlept away in dreaming idleneſs, and fool'd away for things of nought.

The languge of that damned rich

rich man, *Luke* 16. may *help* you in your *predictions*. O how you will wonder at your selves, that ever you could be so blind and sensless, as to be no more affected with the warnings of the Lord, and with the forethoughts of everlasting joy or misery! To have but *One small part* of *Time* to do *all that ever must be done* by you for *Eternity*, and *say all that ever you must say* for your own or others souls, and that this was spent in worse then nothing! To have but *One uncertain life*, in which you must run the race that wins or loseth Heaven for ever; and that you should be tempted by a thing of nought, to lose that *One* irrecoverable opportunity, and to sit still, or run another

way,

way, when you ſhould have been *making haſte with all your Might!* O ſirs, the thoughts of this will be *other kind of* thoughts another day then now you feel them; you cannot now *think* how the thoughts of this will then affect you! That you *had a Time* in which you might have *Pray'd*, with promiſe of acceptance, and had not hearts to *take that time!* That Chriſt was offered you as well as he was offered them that entertained him; that you were called on and warn'd as well as they, but obſtinately deſpiſed and neglected all! That Life and Death were ſet before you, and the everlaſting joyes were offerd to your choice, againſt the charms of

ſinful

sinful Pleasures, and you might have freely had them if you would, and were told that Holiness was the only way, and that it must be *Now or Never*, and yet that you *chose* your own destruction! These thoughts will be *part of Hell* to the ungodly. They will wonder that *Reason* could be so *unreasonable*; and they that had the common wit of man in other matters, should be so far beside themselves in that which is the only thing that its commendable to be wise for; that such sottish *Reasonings* should prevail with them against the clearest light, and *nothing* should be preferred before *all things*; and arguments fetcht from

chaff and *dung*, ſhould conquer thoſe that were fetcht from *Heaven*! O what heart-renting thoughts will theſe be, when *Eternity* ſhall afford them leiſure for an impartial review! Yea that they ſhould deceive *others* alſo with ſuch a groſs deceit, and ſcorn at all that would not be as mad as they; that being drunken with the worlds deluſions, they ſhould abuſe all that were truly ſober, that the one thing *needful*, ſhould ſeem to them a *needleſs thing*! That their tongues ſhould plead for theſe deluſions of their wicked hearts, and they ſhould be enemies to thoſe that would not be enemies to God, and to themſelves, and caſt

away their Time and Souls as *they* did! They will wonder with self-indignation, what could bewitch them into so great unreasonableness, below a man, against the *light of nature*, as well as of supernatural revelation.

Honourable and beloved Hearers, I beseech you do not take it ill, that I speak so much of these matters that are so unpleasant and unwelcome to unbelieving, careless, carnal hearts: It is that I may prevent all this in time, by the awakenings of true Repentance. And O that this might be the success! That I might hear by your penitent Confessions, and see by your universal speedy

reformation, that God hath so great Mercy for you, and that these perſwaſions might be the means of ſo much happineſs to you, and comfort unto me! However *this Aſſembly* ſhall be *witneſſes* that you were warned; and *Conſcience* ſhall be witneſs, that if you waſte the reſt of your dayes in the pleaſures & vanities of this deceitful world, it was not becauſe you *could have no better*, and were not *call'd* to higher things. That if you *yet ſtand idle*, it is not becauſe you could not be *hired*. For in the name of Chriſt I have called you into his vineyard, and told you of your work & wages, and ſhamed your excuſes and objections

this day. Come away then speedily from the snares of sinners, and the company of deceived hardened men, and cast away the works of darkness! Heaven is before you! Death's at hand: The Eternal God hath sent to call you! Mercy doth yet stretch forth its arms! You have staid too long, and abused Patience too much already! Stay no longer! O now please God, and comfort us, and save your selves, by *Resolving that this shall be the Day*, and *faithfully performing of this your Resolution, up & be doing*: Believe, Repent, Desire, Obey, & do all this with all your *Might*. Love him that you must Love for ever, and Love him with

all your Soul and Might; seek that which is truly worth the seeking, & will pay for all your cost & pains: And seek it first with all your Might; Remembring still it must be *Now*, or *Never*.

BEfore I conclude, I have *two* messages yet to deliver to the servants of the Lord: The *One* is of *Encouragement*: The *other* of *Direction*.

I know that many of you have a *threefold trouble*, which requireth a *threefold comfort* and encouragement.

One is, that you *have done so little* of your work, but lost so much of your *time* already:

Another

Another is, that *you are so opposed* and *hindered*. And the greatest of all is, that *you are yet so dull and slow*: The cure of which must be the matter of my *Directions*.

1. For the *first*: That you have *lost your Time*, must be the matter of your *Humiliation*: But that *all is not lost*, before you see your sin and duty; but yet the patience & mercy of the Lord are attending you, and continuing your hope; this is the *matter of your comfort and encouragement*. Repent therefore that you came no *sooner* home: But *rejoyce* that you are *come home at last*: and now be more diligent in *redeeming your time*, in remem-

brance of the *time already loſt*: And though it muſt be your grief, that your Maſter hath been deprived of ſo much of his ſervice, and others of ſo much good which you ſhould have done them, and that time is loſt that cannot be recalled; yet it is *your comfort*, that your *own Reward* may be equal with them that have born the burthen & heat of the day: *For many that are laſt* (in the time of their coming in) *ſhall be firſt* (in receiving the reward.) This is the meaning of that Parable in *Matth.* 20. which was ſpoken to encourage them that had ſtood out too long, and to rebuke the envie and high expectations of them that came in ſooner; and it is

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no whit contradictory to those passages in *Matth.* 25. which intimate a *different degree of Glory* to be given to them that have *different degrees of Grace* upon their industrious improvement. The *one* Parable *Matth.* 20. shewes *that men shall not be rewarded differently for their longer or shorter continuance in the work*, but that those that came in late, and yet are found with equal holiness, shall be rewarded equally with the first: And more, if their holiness be more, which the *second* Parable expresseth, declaring Gods purpose *to give them the greatest Glory, that have improved their Holiness to the greatest degree.* O therefore that the sense of

your former unkindneſſes might provoke you the more reſolvedly to give up your ſelves in fervent love, and full obedience! and then you will find that your *Time is redeemed*, though it cannot be *recalled*; and that Mercy hath ſecured your full reward. O what an unſpeakable Mercy is this! that if yet you will devote your ſelves entirely to Chriſt, and ſerve him with your might, the little time that yet remains, he will take it as if you had come in at the firſt hour of the day!

2. And as for the *oppoſition* and *hinderances* in your way, they are no other then what your Lord foretold. He hath gone before you, and conquer-

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ed much more then ever you will encounter from without, (though he had not a body of sin to conquer; and in that respect the conquest of his *Spirit* in his *members*, hath the preheminence of his *personal conquest*.) He hath bid you *Be of good cheer*, because he hath *Overcome the world*. If you will not take up your cross and follow him, you cannot be his Disciples, *Joh.* 16.33. *Luk.* 14. 27,33. Would you be *souldiers* on condition you *may not fight*; or *fight*, and yet have no *Opposition*? Follow the Captain of your salvation. If mocking, or buffetting, or spitting in his face, or hanging him upon a Cross, or piercing his side, would

would have made him give up the work of your Redemption, you had been left to utter desperation. The opposition that is *conquerable*, should serve but to excite your *Courage* and *resolution*, in a case of such *Necessity*, where you *must prevail*, or *perish*. Have you God himself on your side, *Rom.* 8. 31. and Christ your Captain, and the Spirit of Christ to give you courage, and the promise to invite you, and Heaven before you, and Hell behind you, and the examples of such an Army of conquering believers; and shall the *scorns* or *threats* of a crawling worm prevail against all these for your discouragement? You are not afraid lest

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any man should pull down the *Sun*, or dry up the *Sea*, or overturn the *Earth*: And are you afraid that man should *conquer God*? Rom. 8. 37. or take you out of the hands of Christ? *Joh.* 10. 28, 29. Mark how they used *David*, Psal. 56. 3, 4, 5, 6. *Every day they wrest my words; all their thoughts are against me for evil: They gather themselves together: they hide themselves: they mark my steps when they wait for my soul.* But what, did he therefore fear or fly from God? No [*What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee: In God I will praise his word: In God I have put my trust: I will not fear what flesh can do unto me*] Isa. 51. 7, 8.

[*Hearken*

[*Hearken to me ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my Law: Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings: For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool; but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation.*] You deserve to be shut out of Heaven, if you will not bear the breath of a fools derision for it.

3. But (saith the self accusing soul) *I am convinced that I ought to be laborious for my salvation, and that all is too little that I can do; but I am dull, and cold, and negligent in all: I am far from doing it with my Might:*

I hear

I hear, and read, and pray, as if I did it not, and as if I were half asleep, or my heart were away upon somewhat else. I fear I am but a lazie Hypocrite.]

Answ. I shall first speak to thy *Doubt*, and then to Direct thee against thy sin.

And first, you must be resolved whether your *sloath* be such as is *Predominant*, or *Mortified*; such as proveth that you are *Dead* in sin, or only such as proveth you but *diseased* and *infirm*.

And to know this, you must distinguish 1. Between the *dulness* and *coldness* of the *Affections*, and the *Unresolvedness* and *Disobedience* of the soul. 2. Between a *sloathfulness* that keepeth

eth men *from a godly life* in a life of wickedneſs: and that which only keepeth them from ſome *particular act of duty*, or abateth the *degree* of their ſincere affection and obedience. 3. Between that floath that is the *vicious Habit of the Will*; and that which is the *effect of age*, or *ſickneſs*, or *melancholy*, or other diſtemper of the body.

And ſo the caſe lieth plain before you, 1. If it be not only your *Affections* that are *dull*, but your *Will* through floath is *unreſolv'd*; and this not only in a temptation to the abatement of ſome *Degrees*, and the neglect of ſome *particular Duty*, but againſt a *Holy Life*, and againſt the *forſaking of your reigning ſin*; and this be-

be not only through some *bodily distemper*, disabling your *Reason*, but from the *victious Habit* of *your Wills*; then is your *sloath* a *Mortal* sign, and proves you in a graceless state: But if the *sloath* which you complain of, be only the *dulness* of your *Affections*, and the *backwardness* of your *wills* to some *high degrees*, or *particular Duties*, and the effect of some *bodily distemper*, or the *weakness* of your *spiritual life*, while your *Wills* are *Habitually resolved for God and a Holy life*, against *a worldly fleshly life*: This is your *infirmity*, and a sin to be lamented, but not a mark of Death and gracelessness.

You *will* have a *backward sloathful*

loathful heart to *strive* with while you live. But bleſs God that you are *offended* with it, and would fain be delivered from it. This was *Pauls* evidence, *Rom.* 7. 24. You will *have fleſh*, and *fleſh* will plead for its intereſt, and will be ſtriving againſt the Spirit: But bleſs God that you have alſo the Spirit to ſtrive againſt the fleſh. Be thankful that you have *Life* to feel your ſickneſs, though you languiſh under it, and cannot work as healthful men: And that you are in the way to Heaven, though you go not ſo faſt as you ſhould and would.

2. But yet, though you *have Life*, it is ſo grievous to be

be *diſeaſed*, and *languiſh* under ſuch an *Infirmity* as *ſloath*, that I adviſe you to *ſtir* up your ſelves to the utmoſt, and give not way to a lazie temper; and that you may ſerve the Lord with all your Might, I recommend theſe few *Directions* to your obſervation.

Dir. 1. When you would be quickened up to ſeriouſneſs and diligence, *have ready at hand ſuch quickening Conſiderations as are here before propounded to you; and ſet them before you, and labour to work them upon your hearts.* Powerful truths would have ſome power upon your ſouls, if you will but ſoberly apply your Reaſon to them, and plead them

them with your ſelves, as you would do with another in any of your reproofs or exhortations.

Dir. 2. *Take heed leſt any worldly deſign or intereſt, or any luſt or ſenſual delight, divert your minds from God and duty.* For all the powers of your ſoul will languiſh, when you ſhould ſet them on work on ſpiritual things, and your hearts will be abroad, when they ſhould be wholly taken up with *God*, if once they be entangled with worldly things. Watch therefore over them in your *Callings*, leſt the creature ſteal too deep into your affections: For if you be alive to the world, you will be in that meaſure dead to God. *Dir.*

Dir. 3. *If it be possible, live under a lively Ministry, that when your hearts go cold and dull unto the Assemblies, they may come warm and quickened home.* Life cherisheth life, as fire kindleth fire. The Word and Ordinances of God are quick, powerful, and sharper then any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the hearts, *Heb* 4. 12. And therefore it may do much to make you feel. Many a thousand hath it pricked at the heart, and sent them home alive, that before were dead, *Acts* 2. 37. Much more may you expect that it should excite

cite the principles which you have already.

Dir. 4. *If it may be, converse with lively active stirring Christians:* But especially have *one such* for a *bosome friend*, that will warm you when you are cold, and help to awake you when you drop asleep, and will not comply with you in a declining, lazie, and unprofitable course; *Eccl.* 4.9,10,11, 12. *Two are better then one, because they have a good reward for their labour: For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: But woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat; but how can one alone be warm?*

warns? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

Dir. 5. *Put not away from you the day of death. Look not for long life.* It is the *Life to come* that must be the *Life* of all your duties here: And *distant* things do *lose* their *force*. Set Death, and Judgment, and Eternal Life, continually as *near at hand*: Live in a watchful expectation of your change: Do all as *dying men*, and as [illegible]ling to receive the recompence of endless joy or woe; and this will quicken you. To this end, go often to the *House of mourning*, and be not unseasonably or immoderately in the house

house of mirth. When you observe what is the end of all men, the heart will be made better by it, *Eccl.* 7. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. But excess of carnal mirth doth infatuate men, and destroy their wisdom, seriousness, and sobrietie. Keep alwaies a sense of the brevitie of life, and of the preciousness of Time, and remember that its posting on whether you work or play: Me thinks, if you forget any of the rest, this one Consideration that we have in hand, should make you bestir you *with your Might*, that *It must be Now or Never.*

I shall only add *two* needfull *Cautions*, lest while we cure one disease, we cause another

nother (as knowing that corrupted nature is used to run from extream into extream.)

1. *Desire and labour more for an high Estimation of things spiritual and eternal, and a fixed Resolution, and an even and diligent endeavour, then for passionate feelings and affections.* For *these latter* are more unconstant in the best, and depend much on the temper of the body, and are not of so great necessity as the former, though excellent in a just degree and season. (For its possible that passions even about good things may be too much; when *Estimation*, *Resolution*, and regular *Endeavours* cannot.)

2. *Be suspicious when you have the warmest and liveliest Affections, lest your judgements should be perverted by following when they should lead.* Its very common for *Zeal* and *strong Affections*, even to that which is *good*, to occasion the *mistakes* of the *understanding*, and make men look *all on one side*, and think they can *never go far enough* from some *particular sins*, till ignorantly they are carried into some perhaps as great on the *other hand*. Be warned by the sad experience of *these times*, to suspect your *judgements* in the *fervour* of your *affections*.

And observing *these cautions*, let nothing abate your

Zeal and *Diligence*; But whatever *Duty* is set before you, Do *it with your Might: for it must be Now or Never.*

THough I know that the enmitie to a holy heavenly life is so radicated in corrupted nature, that all that I have said is necessary and too little; yet some I know will think it strange that I should intimate, that any that preach the Gospel are guilty of any measure of this sin, and will think that I intend by it to reflect upon some parties above the rest. But again I profess, that it is no party but the Devils party, and the ungodly party, that I

mean. And its hard if you will not believe me concerning my own ſenſe. Nor is it my deſire that any of the odiouſneſs of Schiſm, Sedition, Rebellion, or Diſobedience to Authoritie, ſhould be ſo much as diminiſhed by any mens profeſſion of Godlineſs. No, I beſeech you, by how much the more godly you are, by ſo much the more deteſt all theſe: Godlineſs tendeth to ſhame and condemn theſe odious ſins, and not to be a cloak for them or any extenuation: Nay what can more aggravate them, then that they ſhould be found in the Profeſſors of Godlineſs? I again profeſs that I have no deſign but to plead for *ſerious* diligence

diligence in the Religion which we are all agreed in, and to stop the mouth of those that wickedly speak against it.

But alas, it is too evident that I have too many to speak to, that are not innocent: why else doth Scripture tell us that such there will be still to the end of the world? and that there are some that preach Christ of strife and envy, to add affliction to the bonds of the afflicted! And how came holy *M. Bolton* to find so much work for these rebukes so lately in his time, as in his Books you find? And can we already forget what abundance of *Antinomian* Teachers were among us, that turned out the very doctrine of practical diligence,

and cried it down as a setting up our selves and our own works, and as injurious to free grace, and under pretence of exalting Christ, did set up a heartless lifeless doctrine, that tended to turn out the life of Christianity, and take men off their necessary diligence, as a legal dangerous thing?

And what Ordinance of God hath not been cast out by Preachers themselves upon Religious pretences, Family-duties, Catechising, singing of Psalms, Baptism, the Lords Supper, and which not? And if all these were down, wherein should the practice of Religion consist? And what abundance of Pamphlets had we that laboured to make the Orthodox faithful

faithful Ministry a very scorn, and deride them for their faithful service of God, and their faithfulness to their Superiors, in opposition to their unrighteous wayes? I am loth to blot my papers, and trouble your ears with the names of the *Martin*-mar-Priests, and a multitude of such others which I mean.

And let no Papist, or any Enemie of our Church, reproach us, because such enemies to *Holiness* are found among us. Can it be expected that our Church should be better then the Family of *Adam*, that had a *Cain*? Or of *Noah*, that had a *Cham*? Or of Christ, that had a *Judas*? And are there not far more enemies to

serious Godliness among the Papists themselves, then among us? One instance out of the Life of *Philip Nerius*, the Father of the Oratorians, I will put into the Preface, because it is too long to be here inserted. There is no place, no rank of men in the world, where some of the enemies of a Holy life are not to be found, even among those that profess the same Religion in Doctrinals, with those whom they oppose. Christ and the Devil have their several Armies; and if once the Devil disband his souldiers, and have none to oppose a holy life, then tell me that its a needless thing to defend it and to confute them. But I am listed under Christ, and will

will never give over pleading for him, till his adversaries give over pleading against him, and his Cause, as long as he continueth my liberty and dutie. And blessed be the Lord, that if an Hypocritical Preacher be found among us, that secretly or openly disgraceth a diligent holy life, there are more able holy, faithfull ones to confute him both by doctrine and by their lives, then are to be found in any other Kingdom in the world proportionably, that ever I could hear of. And that the faithful Disciples are so many, and the *Judas's* so few, how great a blessing is it to this Land, and how great an honour to his Majesties Government and to the Church in his Do-

minions! The Lord teach this sinful Nation to be thankful, and pardon their ingratitude, and never deprive them of this forfeited mercie. The Lord teach them to hearken to the Friends, and not to the Enemies of Holiness, and never to receive a wound at the heart of their Religion, however they heal their smaller differences about things circumstantial.

And now I should conclude, I am *loth to end*, for fear lest I have not *yet prevailed* with you; what are you now *resolved to do*, from this day forward? It is *work* that we have been speaking of, and *necessary work*, of endless consequence, which *must* be done, and quickly done,

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and throughly done. Are you not convinced that it is so? that plowing & sowing are not more necessary to your harvest, then the work of holiness in this day of grace is necessary to your salvation? You are blind if you see not this: you are dead if you feel it not: what then will you do? For Gods sake, and for your own sakes, stand not demurring till time be gone. It is all that the Devil desireth, if he can but find you one thing or other to be thinking, and talking, and doing about, to keep you from this till time be gone: and then he will insult over you, and then he that kept you from seeing and feeling, will help you

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to see and feel to your calamitie: Then the *Devil* will make you feel that which Preachers could not make you feel: and he will make you think of that, and lay it close enough to your hearts, which we could not get you to lay to heart. Now we studie and preach to you in hope; but then (alas it breaks our hearts to think of it) we have done with you for ever, because all hope is gone. Then the Devil may challenge a Minister [Now do thy worst to bring this sinner to repentance: Now call to him to consider, and believe, and come to Christ; Now offer him mercie, and intreat him to accept it: Now cry to him to take heed of sin and of temptations,

rations, that he come not to this place of torments: Now tell him of the beauty or neceſſitie of holineſs, and call upon him to *turn* and *live*: Now do thy worſt to reſcue him from my power, and to ſave his ſoul. Alas poor ſinners! will you ſtop your ears, and go on in ſin, and damn your ſelves, and break our hearts to foreſee that day! Muſt we ſee the Devil go away with ſuch a prey, and ſhall we not reſcue your captivated ſouls, becauſe you will not hear, you will not ſtir, you will not conſent! Oh hear the God of Heaven, if you will not hear us, who calleth to you; *Return*, and *live*! Oh hear him that ſhed his blood

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for Souls, and tendereth you now salvation by his blood? O hear without any more delay, before all is gone, and you are gone, and he that now deceiveth you, torment you! Yet hold on a little longer in a carnal, earthly, unsanctified state, and it is too late to hope, or pray, or strive for your salvation: Yet a little longer, and mercie will have done with you for ever; and Christ will never invite you more, nor never offer to cleanse you by his blood, or sanctifie you by his Spirit! Yet a little longer, and you shall never hear a Sermon more, and never more be troubled with those Preachers that were in good sadness with you, and longed once for your con-

version

vation and salvation! O sleepy dead-hearted sinners, what should I do to shew you how near you stand to Eternitie, and what is now doing in the world that you are going to, & how these things are thought on there! What should I do to make you know how Time is valued, how sin and holiness are esteemed in the world where you must live for ever! What should I do to make you know those things to day, which I will not thank you to know when you are gone hence! O that the Lord would open your eyes in time! Could I but make you know these things as believers should know them, I say not as those that *see them*, nor yet as *dreamers*, that

that do not regard them, but as those that believe that they must shortly see them, what a joyful hours work should I esteem this? how happy would it be to you and me. If every word were accompanied with tears! if I followed you home and beg'd your consideration on my bare knees, or as a beggar begs an alms at your doors; if this Sermon cost me as many censures or slanders as ever Sermon did, I should not think it too dear, if I could but help you to such a sight of the things we speak of, that you might truly understand them as they are; that you had but a true awakened apprehension of the shortness of your day, of the near-

nearneſs of eternity, and of the endleſs conſequence of your preſent work; and what holy labour and ſinful loytering will be thought of in the world to come for ever! But when we ſee you ſin, and triſle, and no more regard your endleſs life, and ſee alſo what haſte your Time is making, and yet cannot make you underſtand theſe things; when we know our ſelves as ſure as we ſpeak to you, that you will ſhortly be aſtoniſhed at the review of your preſent ſloath and folly, and when we know that theſe matters are not thought of in another world, as they are among the ſleepy or the bedlam ſinners here, and yet know not how to *make you know it*,

whom

whom it doth so exceeding much concern, *this* amazeth us, and almost breaks our hearts! Yea when we tell you of things that are *past doubt*, and can be no further matter of controversie, then men have sold their understandings, and betrayed their reason to their fordid lusts, and yet we cannot get reasonable men to know that which they cannot choose but know, to know that seriously and practically which alwayes hath a witness in their breasts, and which none but the profligate dare deny; I tell you sinners, this, even this is worse then a prison to us: It is you that are our persecutors: Its you that are the daily sorrow of our hearts; Its you that

that disappoint us of our hopes, and make us lose so much of the labour of our lives! And if all others did as some do by us, alas how sad an employment should we have! and how little would it trouble us to be silenced and laid aside! If we were sick of the ambitious or covetous thirst, we should then say that it is they that deny us wealth and honour that disappoint us. But if we are Christians, this is not our case, but it is the thirst after your conversion and salvation which affecteth us: and therefore it is you, even you that linger in your sins and delay repentance, and forget your home, and neglect your souls, it is you that dis-

appoint

appoint us, and you that are our afflicters; and as much as you think you befriend us when you plead our cause against men of violence and rage, it is you that shall answer for the loss of our time, and labour, and hope, *and for the grieving* of your Teachers hearts.

Sinners, what ever the devil and raging passion may say against a holy life, God and your own consciences shall be our witnesses, that we desired nothing unreasonable or unnecessary at your hands. I know it is the master-piece of the devils craft, when he cannot keep all Religion in contempt, to raise up a dust of controversie in the world about

about names, and forms, and circumstances in Religion, that he may keep men busily striving about these, while Religion it self is neglected or unknown; and that he may make men believe that they have some Religion, because they are for one side or other in these controversies: and especially that he may entice men to number the substantials of Religion it self among these lesser doubtful points, and make sinners believe that it is but the precise opinion of one party that they reject, while they reject the serious practice of all true Religion. And so the devil gets more by these petty quarrels and controversies, occasioned by contentious

tentious empty men, than he could have done by the open opposition of Infidels, Heathens, or the prophane: so that neither I nor any man that opinionative men have a mind to quarrel with, can tell how to exhort you to the very practice of Christianity it self, but you are presently casting your thoughts upon some points wherein we are reported to differ from you, or remembring some clamours of malicious men, that prejudice against the person of the speaker, may keep your souls from profiting to salvation by the doctrine which even your selves profess.

If this be the case of any one of you, I do not mean your

your consciences shall so scape the power or evidence of the truth. Dost thou talk of our differences about forms and ceremonies? Alas man what's that to the message which we come about to thee? what's that to the business that we are preaching of? The question that I am putting to you, is not whether you will be for this form of Church Government or for that, for a ceremony or against it; but it is, whether you will hearken in time to God and conscience, and be as busie to provide for heaven as ever you have been to provide for earth? and whether you will set your selves to do the work that you are Created and Redeemed

for:

for? This is the business that I am sent to call you to; what say you? will you do it, and do it seriously without delay? you shall not be able to say, that I called you to a party, a faction, or some opinion of my own, or laid your salvation upon some doubtful controversie. No sinner, thy conscience shall have no such shift for its deceit: It is godliness, serious and practical godliness that thou art called to. It is nothing but what all Christians in the world, both Papists, and Greeks, and Protestants, and all the parties among those that are true Christians, are agreed in the profession of. That I may not leave thee in any darkness which I can deliver

thee

thee from, Ile tell thee distinctly, though succinctly, what it is that thou art thus importuned to; and tell me then whether it be that which any Christian can make doubt of.

1. That which I intreat of thee, is but to live as one that verily believeth there is a God; and that this God is the Creator, the Lord, and Ruler of the world; and that it is incomparably more of our business to understand and obey his Laws, and as faithful Subjects to be conformed to them, then to observe or be conformed to the Laws of man: And to live as men that do believe that this God is Almighty, and the greatest of men are less then crawling worms to him; and

that he is infinitely wise, and the wisdom of man is foolishness to him; and that he is infinitely good and amiable; and the best of creatures is dung and filth in comparison of him: and that his love is the only felicity of man; and that none are happy but those that do enjoy it; and none that do enjoy it can be miserable; and that riches, and honour, and fleshly delights are brutish vanities in comparison of the eternal love of God. Live but as men that heartily believe all this, and I have that I come for. And is any of this a matter of controversie or doubt? not among Christians I am sure: not among wise men. It is no doubt to those in

in heaven, nor to those in hell, nor to those that have not lost their understandings upon earth. Live then according to these truths.

2. Live as men that verily believe that *mankind is fallen into sin and misery*: and that all men are corrupted, and under the condemnation of the Law of God, till they are delivered, pardoned, reconciled to God, and made new creatures by a renewing, restoring, sanctifying change. Live but as men that believe that this cure must be wrought, and this great restoring change must be made upon your selves, if it be not done already. Live as men that have so great a work to look after; And is this a mat-

ter of any doubt or controversie here: for it is not to a Christian: And methinks it should not go to any man else that knoweth himself, any more then to a man in a dropsie, whether he be diseased, when he feels the thirst and sees the swelling. Did you but know what cures and changes are necessarily to be made upon your diseased miserable souls, if you care what becomes of them, you would soon see cause to look about you.

3. Live but as men that verily believe that you *are Redeemed by the Son of God*, who hath suffered for your sins, and brought you the tidings of pardon and Salvation, which you may have if you will give up

up your selves to him, who is the Physitian of souls, to be healed by him: Live as men that believe that the infinite love of God revealed to lost mankind in the Redeemer, doth bind us to love him with all our hearts, & serve him with all our restored faculties, and to work as those that have the greatest thankfulness to shew, as well as the greatest mercies to receive, and misery to escape: and as those that believe that if sinners that without Christ had no hope, shall now love their sins and refuse to leave them, and to repent and be converted, and unthankfully reject the mercy of Salvation so dearly bought, and so freely offered them;

their damnation will be doubled as their sin is doubled. Live but as men that have such Redemption to admire, such mercy to entertain, and such a Salvation to attain, and that are sure they can never scape if they continue to neglect so great Salvation, *Heb.* 2.3. And is there any controversie among Christians in any of this? There is not certainly.

4. Live but as men that believe that *the Holy Ghost is given by Jesus Christ to convert, to quicken, to sanctifie all that he will save:* and that except you be born again of the Spirit, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, and that if any man have not the Spirit of Christ,

Christ, the same is none of his, *Joh.* 3, 5, 6. *Rom.* 8. 9. And that without this no patching or mending of your lives by any common principles will serve the turn for your Salvation, or make you acceptable to God, *Heb.* 11, 6. Live as men that believe that this Spirit is given by the hearing of the Word of God, and must be prayed for, and obeyed, and not resisted, quenched and grieved. And is there any controversie among Christians many of this? Ask those that make a mock at Holiness, Sanctification and the Spirit, whether they be not baptized into the name of the Holy Ghost, and profess to believe in him as their Sanctifier, as

well as in the Son as their Redeemer? And then ask them whether it be not a thing that should make even a devil to tremble to come so near the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, as to mock at his office and Sanctifying work, and at the holiness without which no man shall see the Lord! *Heb.* 12. 14. and this after they are baptized and profess to believe in the Holy Ghost as their Sanctifier?

5. Live but as men that believe that sin is the greatest evil, the thing which the Holy God abhorreth. And then you will never make a mock of it, as *Solomon* saith the foolish do, *Prov.* 14. 9. not say, What harm is in it?

6. Live but as men that believe no sin is pardoned without Repentance, and that Repentance is the loathing and forsaking of sin: and that if it be *true*, it will not suffer you to live willfully in any gross sin, nor to desire to keep the least infirmity, nor to be loth to know your unknown sins.

7. Live as those that believe that you are to be members of the *Holy Catholick Church*, and therein to hold the *Communion of Saints*. And then you will know that it is not as a member of any Sect or Party, but as a holy member of this holy Church, that you must be saved: and that it is the name of a *Christian* which is more honourable then the

name of any division or subdivision among Christians, whether Greek, or Papist, or Protestant, or Prelatist, or Presbyterian, or Independent, or Anabaptist. It is easie to be of any one of these parties: but to be a *Christian*, which all pretend to, is not so easie. It is easie to have a burning zeal for any divided party or cause: but the common zeal for the Christian Religion is not so easie to be kindled or kept alive: but requireth as much diligence to maintain it, as dividing zeal requireth to quench it. It is easie to love a party as a party, but to keep up Catholick charity to all Christians, and to live in that holy love and converse which

is

is requisite to [a Communion of Saints] is not so easie. Satan and corrupted nature befriend the love and zeal of faction, which is confined to a party on a controverted cause: but they are enemies to the love of Saints, and to the zeal for holiness, and to the Catholick charity which is from the Spirit of Christ. You see I call you not to division, nor to side with Sects: But to live as members of a holy Catholick Church, which consisteth of all that are holy in the world; and to live as those that believe the *Communion* of *Saints*.

8. Live as those that believe that there is a life everlasting; where the Sanctified

shall

shall live in endless joy, and the unsanctified in endless punishment and wo: live but as men that verily believe a Heaven and a Hell, and a day of judgement, in which all the actions of this life must be revised, and all men judged to their endless state. Believe these things heavily, and then think a holy diligence needless if you can. Then be of the mind of the deriders and enemies of godliness if you can! If one sight of Heaven or Hell would serve without any more ado, instead of other arguments, to confute all the cavils of the distracted world, and to justifie the most diligent Saints in the judgement of those that now abhor them, why should not

not a found belief of the same thing in its measure, do the same.

9. Live but as those that believe this life is given us as the only Time to make preparation for eternal life: and that all whatever shall be done for your salvation, must be Now, just Now, before your time is ended. Live as those that know (and need not faith to tell them) that this Time is short, and almost at an end already, and stayeth for no man, but as a post doth haste away. It will not stay while you are trimming you, or sporting you. It will not stay while you are taken up in Stage-plays, in compliments, in idle visits, or any impertinent needless things.

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It will not carry while you spend yee the other year, or moneth, or day, in your worldlineſs, or ambition, or in your lusts and ſenſual delights, and put off your Repentance to another time. O ſirs, for the Lords ſake do but live as men that muſt ſhortly be buried in a grave, and their ſouls appear before the Lord, and as men that have but this little Time, to do all for their everlaſting life, that ever muſt be done. O live as men that are ſure to die, and are not ſure to live till to morrow: And let not the noiſe of pleaſure or worldly buſineſs, or the chat or ſcorns of miſerable fools, bear down your reaſon, and make you live as if you knew not what you

know:

know: or as if there were any doubt about these things. Who is the man, and what is his name, that dare contradict them, and can make it good? O do not sin against your knowledge: Do not stand still and see your glass running, and Time making such haste, and yet make no more haste your selves, then if you were not concerned in it: Do not, O do not slumber, when Time and Judgement never slumber; nor sit still when you have so much to do, and know all that is now left undone must be undone for ever! Alas sirs, how many questions of exceeding weight have you yet to be resolved in? whether you are truly sanctified? whether your

sins

sins be pardoned? whether you shall be saved when you die? whether you are ready to leave this world, and enter upon another? I tell you the answering of these and many more such questions, is a matter of no small *difficulty* or *concernment*. And all these must be done in this little, and uncertain time. It must be Now or *Never*. Live but as men that believe and consider these certain unquestionable things.

10. Lastly, will you but live as men that believe that the world and the flesh are the deadly enemies of your salvation? And that believe that if any man love the world, (so far) the love of the Father is not

not in him, 1 *Joh.* 2. 15, 16. And as men that believe, that if ye live after the flesh ye shall die, but if by the Spirit ye mortifie the deeds of the body ye shall live, *Rom.* 8. 13. and that those that are in Christ Jesus, and are freed from condemnation, are such as walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, *Rom.* 8. 1. And that we must make no provision for the flesh to satisfie the will or lusts thereof, *Rom.* 13. 10. and must not walk in gluttony and drunkenness, in chambering and wantonness, in strife and envying, *ver.* 13. but must have our hearts where our treasure is, *Matth.* 6. 21. and converse in Heaven, *Phil.* 3. 18, 19, 20. and

being

being risen with Christ, must seek the things that are above, and set our affections on them, and not on the things that are on earth, *Col.* 3. 1, 2, 3.

Sirs, will you say that any of this is our singular opinion, or matter of controversie and doubt? Are not all Christians agreed in it? Do you not your selves profess that you believe it? Live then but as those that do believe it, and condemn not your selves in the things that you confess.

I tell thee, if now thou wilt refuse to live according to these common acknowledged truths, thou shalt never be able to say before the Lord, that mens controversie about a ceremony, or Church Govern-

ment,

ment, or the manner of worship, were the things that hindered thee! But all sorts and Sects shall be witnesses against thee, and condemn thee, for they all agreed in these things: even the bloodiest Sect, that imprison, and torment, and kill others for their differences in smaller matters, are yet agreed with those that they persecute and murder, about these things: Papists are agreed in them, and Protestants are agreed in them: All the Sects that are now quarrelling among us, and in the world, are agreed in them, who are but meet for the name of Christians. All these will be ready to beat witness against the prophane, the sensual, the slothful neg-

lecter

lecter of God and his Salvation, and to say, we all confessed, notwithstanding our other differences, that all these things were certain truths, and that mens lives should be ordered according unto these.

But if yet you pretend controversie to cover your malignity or ungodliness, I will go a little further, and tell you that in the *Matter* as well as in the *Principles*, it is things that we are all agreed in, which I call you to, and which the ungodly do refuse: Ile briefly name them.

1. One part of your work which we urge you to do with all your might, is seriously and soberly to consider often of all these truths before mentioned,

tioned, which you say you do believe: And is it any controversie with reasonable men whether they should use their reason? or with believers, whether they should consider and lay to heart the *weight* and use of the things which they believe.

2. Another part of your work, is to love God with all your soul and might; and to make him your delight, and to seek first his Kingdom and the righteousness thereof; and to set your affections on the things above, and to live on earth as the heirs of heaven: And is there any controversie among Protestants, Papists, or any about this?

3. Another part of your work

work is to seek the honouring of God in the world, the promoting of his Kingdom and Government in your selves and others, the doing of his will, and obeying of his Laws: And is there any controversie in this?

4. Another part of your work is to mortifie the flesh, and reject its conceits and desires and lusts, which resist the foresaid obedience to God; and to cast out the inordinate *love* and *care* of worldly things: to refuse the Counsels, the Commands, the will, the enticements and perswasions of man, which contradict the Commands and Will of God: and to forsake all that you have in the world rather then forsake your

your dear Redeemer, and hazard your Salvation by any willfull sin: To take up your Cross and follow Christ through a life of suffering to glory; I know there is difficulty enough in all this, and that flesh will repine against it and abhor it: But is there any controversie about it among any true believers? Is not all this the express Command of God, and necessary to Salvation?

5. Another part of your work is to avoid temptations, and fly from the occasions and appearances of evil, and not only to avoid that which is directly evil it self, but that also which would draw you into evil (as far as you can) and to keep

keep as far as may be from the brink of Hell and danger, and to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkneſs, nor be companions with them, but reprove them, and mourn for the unclean and wicked converſation of the world. This is it that we intreat of you: And is there any matter of controverſie in all this?

6. Another part of the work which we call you to, is, to redeem this little Time that is alloted you: To make the beſt of it; and improve it to the greateſt furtherance of your Salvation: To loſe none of it upon unprofitable things: To ſpend it in thoſe works which will comfort you moſt when time is gone: If it will be more

more comfortable to you in the day of judgement, that you have ſpent your Time in Playes, and ſports, and idleneſs, and worldly cares, and pleaſures, then in ſerving God and preparing for another life, then hold on and do ſo to the end: But if it will not, then do what you would hear of, ſeeing you muſt hear of it: ſpend none of your Time in idleneſs and unfruitful things, till you have no better and more neceſſary things to ſpend it in: and till you have Time to ſpare from more important work. This is our requeſt to you, that you would not loſe one hour of your pretious Time, but ſpend it as thoſe that have loſt too much and have but a little

more to spend in preparation for eternity. And is this any Schismatical or factious motion? Is there any thing controvertibe, or which any Christian can speak against, in any of this.

7. Another part of your work is, to search the Scripture as that which containeth your directions for eternal life, *Joh.* 5. 39. To love the Word of God more then thousands of gold and silver, and prefer it before your necessary food, *Psal.* 119. 72. *Job* 23. 12. and to meditate in it day and night, as that which is your pleasure and delight, *Psal.* 1. 2. and as that which is able to make you wise unto Salvation, 2 *Tim.* 3. 15. and to build you up

and

and give you an inheritance among the sanctified, *Act.* 20. 32. That you lay up the Word of God in your hearts, and teach them diligently to your Children, and talk of them when you sit in your houses, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up, *Deut.* 6. 6, 7. and 11. 18, 19. that so you and your households may serve the Lord, *Josh.* 24. 15. This is the work that we call you to: And is there any thing that a Christian can make a controversie of in all this? Is there any thing that Protestants are not agreed of?

8. Another part of your work is, that you guard your

tongues, and take not the name of God in vain, and speak no reproaches or slanders against your brethren, and that no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouths, but that which is good to the use of edifying, and that it may minister grace unto the hearers, *Eph.* 4. 29. and that fornication, uncleanness, & covetousness be not once named among you, as becometh Saints: neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient, but rather giving of thanks, *Eph.* 5. 3, 4. And is there any thing of doubt or controversie in this?

9. Another part of the work which we perswade you to, is to

to pray continually, *1 Thes.* 5. 17. and not to wax faint, *Luke* 18. 1. to be fervent and importunate with God, as those that know the greatness of their necessity, *Luk.* 18. 6, 7. *Jam.* 5. 16. That you pray with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, *Eph.* 6. 18. and in every thing by prayer and supplication to make known your requests to God, *Phil.* 4. 6. that you pray for Kings and all in Authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty, *1 Tim.* 2. 1, 2. And is there any thing in all this that any Christian can deny?

10. Lastly, the work we call you to, is, to love your neighbours

bours as your ſelves, and to do to others as you would have them (*arbitrio ſano*) do to you! To ſcorn, deride, moleſt, impriſon, ſlander, or hurt no man, till you would be ſo uſed your ſelves on the like occaſion. To rejoyce in other mens profit and reputation as your own. To envy none, to hate no man, to wrong none in their perſons, eſtates, or names: To preſerve the chaſtity, honour and eſtate of your neighbour as your own. To love your enemies, and forgive them that wrong you, and pray for them that hate, and hurt, and perſecute you. This is your work: And is there any thing of faction, Schiſm or controverſie in this? No, you ſhall

ſhortly

shortly be convinced, that the differences and controversies of believers, and the many opinions about Religion, were a wretched hypocritical pretence for your neglect and contempt of the substance of Religion, about which there was no difference, but all parties were agreed in the confession of the truth, however hypocrites would not live according to their own professions.

But perhaps you'le say, that there is such difference in the *Manner* yet among them that agree in the *Principles* and the *Matter*, that you know not which way God is to be worshipped?

I answer, 1. Do you pra-

tice as aforesaid, according to the Principles and matter agreed on, or not? If you do not, it is but gross hypocrisie to pretend disagreements in the *Manner*, as an excuse for your contempt or omission of the *Matter*, which all agree in. Forsooth your families shall be *prayerless*, and you will make a jeast of *serious prayer*, because some pray on a book, and some without, and some that are wisest, think that either way is lawful. Will God be deceived by such silly reasonings as these?

2. But this shall not hide the nakedness of your impiety. Will you also in the *Manner* of your obedience, but go so far as all *Christians* are *agreed* in?

I will briefly then give you some particular instances.

1. The work of God must be *done with reverence*, in his *fear*: not like the common works of men, with a common careless frame of mind: God will be *sanctified of all that draw near him*, *Lev.* 10. 3. He will be served as God, and not as man: He will not be prayed to with a regardless mind, as those do that can divide their tongues from their hearts, and say over some customary words while they think of something else. Its a dreadful thing for dust to speak to God Almighty; and a dangerous thing to speak to him as slightly and regardlesly, as if we were talking to one of our companions.

It beſeemeth a believer to have more of the fear of God upon his heart, in his *ordinary converſe* in the world, then hypocrites and formaliſts have in their moſt *ſolemn prayers*. Knoweſt thou the difference between God and man? Put then ſuch a difference between God and man in thy addreſſes, as his Majeſty requireth. And ſee alſo that thy *family* compoſe themſelves to a *reverent behaviour*, when they joyn with thee in the worſhipping of God. What have you to ſay now againſt this *reverent manner* of behaviour? Is there any thing controvertible in this?

2. It is alſo requiſite that you be *ſerious* and *ſober* in all the ſervice you performe to God.

God. Do it not ludicrously, and with half a heart! Be as much more fervent and serious in seeking God and your Salvation, then you are in seeking worldly things, as God and your Salvation is better then any thing in the world: Or if that be beyond your reach (though else there is reason for it) at least let the *greatest things* have the *greatest power* upon your hearts. You cannot pray more fervently for heaven then heaven deserveth. O let but the excellency and greatness of your work, appear in the *serious manner* of your performance. I hope you cannot say that this is any point of controversie, unless it be a controversie whether a man

man should be an hypocrite, or be *seriously* in the Religion which he doth profess.

3. It is requisite that your service of God be performed *understandingly*, Psalm 47. 7. 1 Cor. 14. 15. God delighteth not in the blind devotion of men that know not what they do. Prayers not understood are indeed no prayers: For no mans desire goeth further then his knowledge: And he expresseth not his desires that knoweth not what he expresseth himself. Nor can he expect the concurrence of another mans desires, that speaketh what another understandeth not. The word that is not understood cannot sinke into the heart and sanctifie it:

or

or if it be not well and soundly understood, is easily stolen away by the tempter, *Matth.* 13. 19, 23. If understanding be necessary in our common conversations, much more in our holy addresses to the Almighty, *Prov.* 17. 27. *A man of understanding is of an excellent Spirit*: but God hath *no pleasure in fools* or in their *Sacrifices*, Eccles. 5. 1, 4. nor is pleased with a Patrot like lip-service, which is not understood. He saith in detestation of the hypocrites, *This people draweth near unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me*, Mat. 15. 8, 9. I hope then whom we call you to serve God in judgement and with under-

understanding, we call you to nothing that a Christian should make question of.

4. *God is a Spirit*, and they that serve him must serve *him in Spirit and in truth*, Joh. 4. 24. *The Father seeketh such to worship him*, ver. 23. He calleth for the *heart*: he looketh for the inward desires of the soul: He converseth with minds that are *abstracted* from vanity, and are *seriously* taken up in attending him, and are intent upon the work they do: The *carkass* of a *Prayer* separated from the *Life* of it, stinketh before the holy God. As he will be *loved*, so will he be *served*, *with all the heart and soul and might*. And do we call you then to any thing that is

is doubtful, when we call you to the Spiritual worshipping of God?

5. Yet we maintain that the *body* hath its part in the service of God as well as the *soul*, and the *body* must express the inward reverence and devotion of the soul; though not in a way of *hypocritical ostentation*, yet in a way of *serious adoration*. The bowing of the knee, the uncovering of the head, and reverent deportment, and whatsoever nature, or common use, & holy institution hath made an expression of holy affections, and a decent and grave behaviour of our selves, should be carefully observed in the presence of the most High, and the holy things of God more reverently

reverently to be respected then the presence of any mortal man. And the rather because that a grave, and reverent, and holy manner of deportment in Gods worship, reflecteth upon the heart, and helpeth us in our inward and spiritual devotion: and it helpeth the beholders, and awakeneth them to reverent thoughts of God, and holy things, which a regardless and common manner of deportment would extinguish. And its no *dishonour* to *reverent behaviour*, that it is the use of *Hypocrites*, but rather an *honour* to it; For it is something that is *good* that the *Hypocrite* useth for the cloak of his secret *emptiness* or *evil*. If there were nothing *good* in

reverent

reverent behaviour before God, it would not serve the Hypocrites turn. As it is a commendation to *long-prayer*, that the Phariſes made it their pretence for the devouring of widdows houſes: And thoſe that call them hypocrites that are *much* in *holy exerciſes* and *ſpeeches*, ſhould conſider, that if *holy exerciſes* and *ſpeeches* were not good, they were not fit for the hypocrites deſign; *evil* will not be a fit *cloak* for *evil*: that which the hypocrite thinks neceſſary to the *covering* of *his ſin*, we muſt think *more neceſſary* to the *cure* of our ſin and the ſaving of our ſouls: The way to avoid *hypocriſie* is not by running into *impiety* and *prophaneſs*: we muſt *do*

more

more then the *hypocrite*, and not leſs, elſe he will riſe up in judgement againſt you and condemn you, if he would do more to *ſeem good*, then you would do to *be good*; and to pleaſe your Maker: if a Phariſee will *pray longer* to colour his oppreſſion, then you will do to *attain Salvation*. The miſchief of *hypocriſie* is, that the *ſoul* of Religion is wanting, while the *corps* is preſent: And will you caſt away both *ſoul and body*; both *inſide* and *outſide*, in oppoſition to *hypocriſie*? If others do *ſeem* to love God when they do not, will you therefore not ſo much as *ſeem* to do it? So here about *reverence* in the ſervice of God: The *hypocrite* ſhould not

exceed

exceed the *sincere* in any thing that is truly good. This is the *manner* of Gods service that I perswade you to, and to no other: And is there any thing of controversie in this? Prefer but the Spiritual part, and know but what that meaneth, [*I will have mercy and not sacrifice*] that so you may not *condemn the innocent*, and you shall never say that we will be more backward then you to *decency*, and *reverent* behaviour in Gods service.

6. God will be served in *Purity* and *Holiness*, with cleansed hearts and hands, and not with such as remain defiled with the guilt of any willfull sin. He abhorreth the *sacrifice* of the wicked and disobedient.

He

He that turneth away his ear from hearing the Law, his prayers are abominable, Prov. 28. 9. and 15. 8. & 21. 27. Isa. 1. 11. Eccles. 5. 1, 2, 3, 4. [*To what purpose is the multitude of your Sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord,* (to oppressing wicked men) *Isa.* 1. 11. *When you come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand to tread my Courts? Bring no more vain oblations: incense is an abomination to me: the new Moons and Sabbaths, the calling of Assemblies I cannot away with: it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting,* &c. ver. 12, 13. *And when you spread forth your hands I will hide mine eyes from you: yea when you make many prayers I will not hear: your*

hands are full of blood: Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes: cease to do evil; learn to do well, seek judgement, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widdow; Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord.]

To play the *glutton*, or *drunkard*, or filthy *fornicator* in the *day-time*, and then to come to God at *night*, as if it were to make him amends by an hypocritical prayer; to *blaspheme* Gods *name*, and oppose his *Kingdom* and *Government* in your selves and others, and to do your *own will*, and hate and scorn them that do *his will*, and study *his will* that they may do it, and then to *pray that Gods*

name

name may be hallowed, his Kingdom come, and his will be done] is an *abusing* God, and not a *serving* or *pleasing* him. *Live* according to your *prayers*, and let your *lives* shew as well as your *words* what it is that you *desire*. This is the service of God that we call you to: And can you say that there is any thing controvertible in all this? Are there any men, of any party among Christians, or sober Infidels that dare contradict it?

7. God will be served *entirely* and *universally*: in all his Commands; and with all your faculties: in works of *Piety*, *Justice*, and *Charity*, which must never be separated: You must not pretend your

Charity

Charity against duties of *Piety*; for God is to be preferred in your estimation, love and service; and all that is done for *man* must be done for *his sake*. You must not set up duties of *Piety* against duties of *Justice*, *Charity* and *Sobriety*: It is not *true Piety* that will not bring forth these. *God* must be *loved above all*, and our *neighbour as our selves*; and these two *sorts* of *love* are inseparable. Do *all the good* you can to *all* while you have *opportunity*; *especially to them of the household of faith*, Gal. 6. 10. what good you would *hear of* in the day of your accounts, that *do now*, speedily, diligently, and sincerely, according to your power. Say not, I may come

to

to want my self, but [*cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt finde it after many dayes: give a portion to seven, and also to eight, for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth,* Eccles. 11. 1, 2.] and whether all may not quickly be taken from thee; and then thou wilt wish thou hadst done good with it while thou hadst it, and lent it to the Lord, and *trusted* him with thy *remainder* who entrusted thee with his *blessings*; and hadst made thee *friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness, that when all fail they might receive thee into the everlasting habitations.* Drop not now and then a scant and grudging alms, as if thou were a *loser* by it, and God must be beholden

beholden to thee; but believe, that the greateſt gain is to thy ſelf, and look after ſuch bargains, and do good as readily, and gladly, and liberally, as one that verily expecteth a full reward in Heaven. This is part of the ſervice of God that we exhort you to, even to viſit, and relieve, and love Chriſt in his members and brethren (*Mat.* 25.) and is there any thing of *doubt* or *controverſie in all this?*

8. Moreover, God will be ſerved with *Love, and willingneſs, and delight*: It is the moſt gainful, honourable, bleſſed, and pleaſant work in the world, which he hath appointed you, and not a *toilſome* task or ſlaverie: And therefore it

is not a Melancholy, pining, troubleſome courſe of life that we perſwade you to, under the name of Godlineſs; but it is to rejoyce in the Lord, and to live in the joyful expectations of Eternal Life, and in the ſenſe and aſſurance of the Love of God. If you could ſhew us any probabilitie of a more pleaſant and joyful life on Earth, then that which ſerious Holineſs doth afford, I ſhould be glad with all my heart to hearken to you. I am ready to tell you what is the ground of *our comforts*, which faith revealeth: If you will come, and ſoberly debate the caſe, and ſhew us the matter and ground of *your comforts*, which you have or hope for in

any

any other way; if *yours* prove *greater*, and *better*, and *surer* then the *joyes of faith*, we will hearken to you, and be of your mind and side.

The matter of the *joyes* of a *Believer* is, that all his sins are pardoned; that God is reconciled to him in Christ; that he hath the promise of God, that all things, even the greatest sufferings, shall work together for his good; that he is alwayes in the love, and care, and hands of God; that he hath leave to draw near him by holy prayer, and open his heart to him in all his straits and wants; that he may solace himself in his Praises and Thanksgiving, and in other parts of holy worship; that he

may read and hear his holy Word, the sure discoverie of the will of God, and revelation of the things unseen, and the Charter of his Inheritance; that he may exercise his soul in the serious believing thoughts of the Love of God revealed in the wonderful work of our Redemption, and of the person, and office, and grace of Jesus Christ our Redeemer, and that he may love that God that hath so wonderfully loved him; that he hath the Spirit of God so quicken and actuate his soul, to supply his spiritual defects, and kill his sins, and help him to Believe, to Love, to Rejoyce, to Pray; that this Spirit is Gods Seal upon him, and the earnest of

of everlasting life; that Death shall not kill his hopes, nor end his happiness, but that his felicitie & fullest joy beginneth, when that of worldlings hath an end, and their endless miserie begins; that he is delivered from everlasting torment by the redemption of Christ, and the sanctification of the spirit; that Angels will attend his departing soul into the presence of his Father; that he shall be with his glorified Redeemer, and behold his Glory; that his body shall be raised to everlasting life; that he shall be justified by Christ from all the accusations of the Devil, and all the slanders of the malicious world; that he shall live with God in endless

Glory, and see and enjoy the Glory of his Creator, and shall never more be troubled with enemies, with sin or sorrow, but among his holy ones, shall perfectly & most joyfully love & praise the Lord for ever.

These are the matter of a *Believers joy*: *These*, purchased by Christ, revealed in his Word, sealed by his Miracles, his Blood, his Sacraments, and his Spirit, are our comfort. *This* is the *Religion*, the *labour* that we invite you to: It is not to *despair*, nor to some dry unprofitable toil, nor to self-troubling, grieving, miserable melancholy, nor to costly Sacrifices, or idle Ceremonies, or irrational Service, such as the Heathens offered to their Idols;

dols; it is not to cast away all mirth and comfort, and to turn unsociable, and morose, and sowr; but it is to the greatest joyes that the world alloweth, and nature is here capable of, and reason can discern & own: It is to begin a truly merry sociable life: It is to fly from fear and sorrow, in flying from sin and Hell, and from the consuming wrath of God: It is to the foretasts of everlasting joyes, and to the beginnings of eternal life. This is the labour, the Religion, which we would have you follow with all your Might.

If *you* have *better* things to seek, and follow, and finde, let us see them, that we may be as wise as you. If you have not,

for your ſouls ſake, make not choiſe of vanitie, which will deceive you in the day of your neceſſitie.

But you muſt not think to make us believe that a great houſe, or a horſe, or a whore, or a feaſt, or a flatterer, or fine cloaths, or any childiſh toys, or brutiſh filthineſs, are more comfortable things then Chriſt, and everlaſting Life, or that it is ſweeter and better to love a harlot, or lands, or money, then to love God, and Grace, and Glory; nor that any thing that will go no further then the Grave with you, is as good as that which will endure to Eternity; nor that any pleaſures which a dog or ſwine hath, is equal to the

delights of the Angels of Heaven: If you would have us of *your mind*, you must not be of *this mind*, nor perswade us to such horrible things as these. But we profess to you and all the world, that we are not so in love with *sorrows* or *sowrness*, nor so fallen out with *joy* and *pleasures*, as to *choose* a life of *miserable sadness*, or refuse a life of *true delight*. If we could hear from any man, or finde by the most diligent enquiry, that there is a more full and sweet, and rational, and satisfactory, and durable delight to be had in any other way then that of *serious faith and holiness*, which Christ in Scripture hath revealed to us, we were like enough to hearken after it.

But can the distracted sensual world believe that its sweeter and happier to ruffle it out in fleshly gallantry and sport, and to rage against the godly for a while, till the vengeance of God lay hold upon them, and give them their reward, then to live in the love of God, and wait in patience for the performance of Gods promise of everlasting joy? Oh what a thing is fleshly passion, and raging sensuality, and blind unbelief! The Lord have mercy upon deluded sinners; the Devils business is to turn the world into a *Bedlam*; and alas, how strangely hath he prevail'd! That so many men can take their *greatest misery* for their *happiness*, and the *only happiness* for an *intolerable life!*

life! Yea, and be *so angry* with all that are not of *their mind*, and will not set as *much* by filth and foolery; and as *little* by God and Glory as they! Like the Nobleman that was Lunatick, or mad by fits, and whenever he was mad, he would swear all were mad that said not as he said, and would make all his servants be sent to *Bedlam* that would not imitate him, and there they must lie as mad men till their Lord was recovered from *his madness*. So are Gods servants used and talkt of in the world, as if they were beside themselves, as long as the world is uncured of its madness. As the *Man is*, so is *his judgement*, and such is his *relish*, and *desire*,

and

and *delight*? When I was a child, I had far more desire to fill my pin-box, then now I have to fill my purse, and accounted it a greater treasure, and had much more delight & contentment in it. And alas, we may remember since we were strangers to the relish of Heavenly things, that we found more pleasure in that of which we are now ashamed, then we did in the most high and excellent things. Let us therefore pitie and pray for those that are distempered with the same disease.

I have been longer on this then I thought to have been, because men think that we call them from *all Mirth*, and *Joy*, and *Pleasure*, to a *sowr*, *heavy*, me-

melancholy life, when we call them to *serious diligence* for their ſalvation. As if levity and folly were the only friends to *Pleaſure*, and it were only to be found in childiſh, worthleſs, tranſitory things. And as if the greateſt everlaſting Happineſs were no matter of true *Delight*, nor *Seriouſneſs* or *Diligence* a friend to *Joy*.

9. Moreover, as to the *manner*, God will be ſerved with *abſolute ſelf-reſignation*, without *Exceptions*, *Limitations* or *Reſerves*: Not with the leavings of the fleſh, nor with a *Proviſo* that you may not ſuffer by your Religion, or be poor, or *deſpiſed*, or *abuſed* by the world: But with *ſelf-denyal* you muſt lay down all the

fleſh's

flesh's interest at his feet; and you must take up your Cross, and follow a suffering Christ to glory. You must serve him as those that are wholly His, and not your own, and *have* nothing but what is His, and therefore nothing to be *excepted*, *reserved* or *saved from him*; but must be content that *you* and all your interest be in his hands, and *saved by him*, if saved at all. I know these terms seem *hard* to flesh and blood (and should Heaven be the Crown and reward to them, that have undergone no tryal for it?) But here is nothing but what is *past* all *controversie*, and all Christians do confess is the Word of Christ.

10. Lastly, God will be served

ſerved *reſolvedly* and *conſtantly*: If you will *raign*, you muſt *conquer* and *endure to the end*. *Oppoſition* you muſt expect, and overcome it, if you would not be overcome. It is not good beginnings that will ſerve turn, unleſs you alſo *perſevere*, and fight out the good fight of faith, and finiſh your courſe, and patiently wait to the laſt breath, for the Crown of Righteouſneſs, which the Righteous Judge will give the Conquerours, when the unbelieving world ſhall ſay of all their *Delight* and *Hope*, [Its *paſt* and gone, we ſhall never ſee or taſt it *more*] but muſt now taſt of that endleſs wrath of God which we were treaſuring up, when we ſhould have wrought out our ſalvation. Well

Well sirs, I have all this while been describing to you, both as to the *Principles*, the *Matter* and the *Manner*, what that Religion and Service of God is, in which you must labour with all your might: that you may see that it is no factious or private opinions or practices that we call you to, and that your consciences may no longer be deluded with the pretences of mens different opinions in Religion; and that the names of Prelatical, Presbyterian, Puritan, Papist, nor any other sounding in your ears, may not so distract and doat you, as to make you forget the name of *Christian* which you have all undertaken, nor what the Christian

Religi-

Religion is. You see now that it is nothing (no not a syllable or tittle) which all sober Christians are not agreed in, that we perswade you to do as the work of your Religion: And therefore I tell you again here, before that God that shall be your Judge, and that Conscience that shall be as a thousand witnesses, that if you will go on in ungodly worldly lives, and refuse the *serious diligence* of Christians in *this Religion* which *your selves profess*, it shall be so far from being any excuse or ease to you, that there were *Hypocrites*, or *Hereticks*, or *Schismaticks*, or *different opinions in Religion* in the world, that this very thing shall aggravate your sin and con-

condemnation, that all these Hypocrites, Schismaticks, or differing parties in the Church, did *agree* in the confession of *all these things*, and yet for all that you would not practice them: no nor practice what *your selves confessed*: All these Parties or Sects shall rise up against the sensual and prophane ungodly sinner, and say, [Though we were ignorant or doubtful of many other things, yet we were all agreed in these: we gave our concurrent testimony for them: we tempted no man to doubt of these, or to deny them.] If you will *erre more* then an *Hypocrite* or a *Schismatick*, and be far *worse* then those that *are* such, or *you account* such, and think to excuse

cuſe it, becauſe *they erred* in leſſer things, it is as if the devil ſhould excuſe his ſin by ſaying, [Lord, thy Saints did none of them love thee as they ſhould, and Hypocrites did but *ſeem* to love thee, and therefore I thought I might hate thee and ſet againſt thy wayes.]

BUT (ſaith the ungodly ſenſualiſt) *I will never believe that God delighteth in long and earneſt prayers: or that he is moved by the paſſions or the words of men: and therefore I take this but for babling, which you call the ſerious diligence of Believers, in their ſerving God.*]

To this impious objection, I return theſe ſeveral anſwers.

1. Sup-

1. Suppose this *were true* as you imagine, whats this to you that serve God *no way at all* with any *serious diligence?* that live in sensuality, and wilfull disobedience to his Laws, and do more for your bodies then for your souls, and for temporal things then for eternal?

2. Who do you think is likest to understand Gods mind, and what is pleasing to him? Himself or you? Is any thing more plainly commanded in Gods Word then *praying* with *frequency*, *fervency* and *importunity?* Luk. 18. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. 1 Thes. 5. 17. Jam. 5. 16. And will you tell God that he hath but dissembled with you, and told you that he is pleased with that which is not pleasing to him?

3. And

3. And what is the reason of your unbelief? forsooth, because God is not moved with humane words or passions! I grant he is not. But what of that? Hath prayer no other use but to move God? It is enough, 1. That it moveth us, and fitteth us to receive his mercies. 2. And that God hath made it *necessary* to the *effect*, and a means or condition without which he will not give the blessing? Do you think (if you judge but by natural reason) that a person is as fit for a mercy that knoweth not the want or worth of it, and would not be thankful for it if he had it, as one that valueth it, and is disposed to thankfulness and improvement?

ment? And do you not know that holy prayer is nothing but the actuating of holy desires, and the exercise of all those graces which are suited to the due estimation and improvement of the mercy. And is it not the way when we would draw the *boat* to the *bank*, to lay hold of the *bank* and pull, as if we would draw it to the *boat*? If God be not moved and drawn to us, it is enough that we are moved and drawn to God: And with all that God may give his own blessings to whom and upon what terms he please, and that he hath assured us he will give them but to those that value, desire, and seek them, and that with faith, and fervency, and importunity. And

And yet I may add, that God is so far above us, as that his incomprehensible essence, and blessed nature is very little known to us; and therefore though we know and confess that he hath no humane passions or imperfections, yet if he assume to himself the title of such a thing as love, desire, joy or wrath, we must in reason believe, that though *these* are not in God as they are in [illegible] with any imperfection; yet there is something in God that cannot fitlyer be represented to man, nor be understood by man, then by the images of such expressions as God himself is pleased to use.

3. But I beseech you hearken to *Nature* it self. Doth it not

not teach all rational creatures in neceſſitie to *pray to God?* A ſtorm will teach the prophaneſt Sea-man to pray, and that with continuance and fervencie. The Mariners could ſay to *Jonah* in their danger [*What meaneſt thou, O ſleeper? ariſe, call upon thy God, if ſo be that God will think upon us, that we periſh not.*] And *they* themſelves *cried every man unto his God*, Jon. 1. 5,6. When thou comeſt *to die*, and ſee there is no more delay, nor any more hope from the pleaſures of ſin, or from any of thy companions or old deceits, then tell me whether *nature* teach thee not to cry, and cry mightily for pardon, and mercy, and help to God? Then we ſhall hear thee

thee crying [O mercie, mercie Lord, upon a miserable sinner] though now they will not believe that prayer doth any good.

Ile say no more to thee of this: If Nature be not conquered, and Grace have not forsaken thee, thou wilt be taught at home to answer this objection. Sure thou canst not easily so far conquer Reason, as to believe that there is no God. And if thou believe that there is a God, thou canst not believe that he is not to be worshipped, and that with the greatest *seriousness and diligence!* Nor that he is not the giver of all that thou dost want! Or that the Governour of the world

regardeth not the dispositions and actions of his subjects, but will equally reward the good and bad, and give to all alike, and have no respect to mens preparations for his reward. What Heathen that believeth that there is a God, doth not believe that Prayer to him is a necessary part of his worship?

Obj. But is not your strict observation of the Lords day a controverted thing?

Answ. In this also will strip three of this excuse. 1. Spend the Lords day but according to the common principles of Christianity and Reason, and it shall suffice: Spend it but as one that loveth God better then any thing in the world, and that taketh more pleasure

pleasure in his service then in sin & vanitie: Spend it but as the *necessities* of thy *own soul*, and thy *families* require, as one that is glad of so honourable, gainful, & delightful an employment, as the publick and private worshipping of God, & the serious contemplation of the life to come: As one that knoweth the need and benefit of having stated times for the service of God: and what would come of [illegible] religion, if the Time were left to each ones will? Spend it as men that put a just difference between the common business of this world, and the things that concern your endless state; and that have considered the proportion of one day in seven, in refe-

rence to this different consequence of the work: Spend it as men that have lost as much time as you have done, and have need to make the best of the little that is left; and that are behind hand so far in the matters of your salvation, and have need to work with all your might, and should be gladder of the helps of such a day, then of thousands of gold and silver: Spend it as those that believe that we owe God as much service as the *Jewes* did: Spend it as the ancient Christians spent it, that were wont to stay together almost from morning till night in publick worship & communion: Spend it as the Kings Declaration requireth, which saith,

saith [*Our purpose and Resolution is, and shall be, to take care that the Lords day be applyed to holy exercises, without unnecessary divertisements.*]

2. And if yet there be any doubt in this, I refer you to the judgement of the Church of *England*, expressed in the *Homily of the Time and Place of Prayer*. And for the *Time*, the *Name*, the *Antiquity*, the *Authority*, and the *Work* it self, I desire you but to receive what is there delivered, not by any factious persons, but by the Church. Do this, and we are agreed and satisfied. And I make it my request to the Reader, to peruse both *Parts* of that *Homily*, that he may know how far the Church of *Eng-*

lands is from the loose conceits of the enemies of Godliness: And if also you will read over the Homilies against the Peril of Idolatry, you will the fuller know the judgement of the Church about the manner of Gods worship. (Indeed the whole Book is such as the people should be acquainted with.)

I Have done my part to open to you the Necessity of *SERIOUS DILIGENCE*, and to call up the sluggish souls of sinners to mind the work of their salvation, and to do it *SPEEDILY*, and with all their *MIGHT*. I must now leave the success to God and you.

What

What use you will make of it, and what you will be and do for the time to come, is a matter that more concerneth your selves then me. If long speaking, or multitude of words, were the way to prevail with you, I should willingly speak here while my strength would endure, and lengthen out my exhortations yet sevenfold. But that's not the way: A little wearieth you. You love long feasts, and long visits, and plays, and sports, much better then long Sermons, or Books, or Prayers. But it is no small grief to us, to leave you in a case of such importance, without some considerable hopes of your deliverance. Sir, the matter is now laid

before you, and much in your own hands; it will not be so long! What will you now do Have I *convinced* you now, that God and your salvation are to be sought with all your might? If I have not, it is not for want of evidence in what is said, but for want of willingness in your selves to know the truth: I have proved to you, that it is a matter *out of controversie*, unless your lusts, and passions, and carnal interest will *make a controversie* of it. I beseech you tell me, if you be of any Religion at all, why are you not *strict*, and *serious*, and *diligent*, and *mortified*, and *heavenly in that Religion* which you are of? Sure you will not so far shame your own

own Religion, whatever it be, as to say that your Religion is not for mortification, holiness, heavenlyness, self-denial, or that your Religion alloweth you to be ambitious, coverous, gluttonous, drunken, to curse, and swear, and whore, and rail, and oppress the innocent; It is not *Religion*, but *Diabolical serpentine maligniry* that is for any of this.

Its wonderful to think, that learned men, and Gentlemen, and men that pretend to reason and ingenuity, can quietly betray their souls to the Devil upon such silly grounds, and do the evil that they have no more to say for, and neglect that duty that they have no more to say against, when they

know they must do it *NOW* or *NEVER!* That while they *confess* that there is a God, and a life to come, a Heaven and a Hell, and that this life is purposely given us for preparation for Eternity, while they *confess* that God is most wise, and holy, and good, and just, and that sin is the greatest evil, and that the word of God is true, they can yet make shifts to quiet themselves in an unholy, sensual, careless life: And that while they honour the Apostles and Martyrs, and Saints that are dead and gone, they hate their successors and imitators, and the lives that they lived, and are inclined to make more Martyrs by their malicious cruelty.

Alas,

Alas, all this comes from the want of a found belief of the things which they never saw; and the diſtance of thoſe things, and the power of paſſion, and ſenſual objects and inclinations, that hurry them away after preſent vanities, and conquer reaſon, and rob them of their humanity; and by the noiſe of the company of ſenſual ſinners, that harden and deaffen one another, and by the juſt judgement of God, forſaking thoſe that would not know him, and leaving them to the blindneſs and hardneſs of their hearts. But is there *no remedy*! O thou the fountain of mercy and relief, vouchſafe theſe miſerable ſinners a remedy! O thou the

Saviour

Saviour of lost mankind, have mercy upon these sinners in the depth of their security, presumption, and misery! O thou the Illuminater and Sanctifier of souls, apply the remedy so dearly purchased! *we* are constrained oft to fear lest it be much long of *us*, that should more *seriously* preach the awakening truths of God unto mens hearts. And verily our consciences cannot but accuse us, that when we are most *lively* and serious, alas, we seem but almost to trifle, considering on what a message we come, and of what transcendent things we speak. But Satan hath got his advantage upon *our hearts*, that should be instrumental to kindle *theirs*, as well

well as *to theirs* that should receive the truth. O that we could thirst more after their salvation! O that we could pray harder for it; and entreat them more earnestly; as those that were loth to take a denyal from God or man: I must confess to you all with shame and sorrow, that I am even amazed to think of the hardness of my own heart, that melteth no more in compassion to the miserable, and is no more earnest and importunate with sinners, when I am upon such a *subject as this*, and am telling them that it must be NOW or NEVER; and when the messengers of *Death within*, and the *flame* of *meer displeasure* from *without*, doth tell me how

likely

likely it is that *my Time* shall be but *short*, and that if I will say any thing that may reach the hearts of sinners, for ought I know, it must be NOW or NEVER: O what an obstinate, what a lamentable disease is this insensibility and hardness of heart! If I were sure this were the last Sermon that ever I should preach, I find how my heart would shew its sluggishness, and rob poor souls of the *serious fervour* which is suitable to the subject and their case, and needful to the desired success.

But yet, poor sleepy sinners, *hear us*: Though we speak not to you as men would do, that had *seen Heaven* and *Hell*, and were themselves in a perfectly

fectly awakened frame, yet *hear us* while we speak to you the *words of truth* with some *seriousness* and compassionate desire of your Salvation. O look up to your God! Look out unto eternity: Look inwardly upon your souls: Look wisely upon your short and hasty Time: and then bethink you how the little remnant of your Time should be employed; and what it is that *most* concerneth you to dispatch and secure before you dye. *Now* you have *Sermons*, and *Books*, and *Warnings*: It will not be so *long*: Preachers must have done: *God* threateneth them, and *death* threateneth them, and *men* threaten them, and it's *you*, it's *you* that are most severely

severely threatened, and that are called on by Gods warnings, [*If any man have an ear to hear, let him hear.*] *Now* you have abundance of private helps: you have abundance of understanding gracious companions; you have the Lords dayes to spend in holy exercises for the edification and solace of your souls; you have choice of sound and serious Books; and blessed be God, you have the Protection of a Christian and a Protestant King and Magistracy: O what invaluable mercies are all these! O know your time, and use these with industry, and improve this harvest for your souls! For it will not be thus *always*: It must be NOW or NEVER. You

You have *yet* time and leave to *Pray* and cry to God in hope: Yet if you have hearts and tongues, he hath a hearing ear: The Spirit of grace is ready to assist you: It will not be thus *always*: The time is coming when the lowdest cries will do no good: O pray, pray, pray poor needy miserable sinners; for it must be NOW or NEVER.

You have *yet* health and strength, and bodyes fit to serve your souls: It will not be so *always*: Languishing and pains and death are coming. O use your health and strength for God: For it must be NOW or NEVER.

Yet there are some stirrings of *conviction* in your *Consciences*:

ences: You finde that all is not well with you; and you have some thoughts or purposes to repent and be new creatures: There is some hope in this, that yet God hath not quite forsaken you. O trifle not and stifle not the convictions of your consciences, but hearken to the witness of God within you: It must be NOW or NEVER.

Would you not be loth to be left to the despairing case of many poor distressed souls, that cry out, *O it is now too late! I fear my day of grace is past; God will not hear me now if I should call upon him: he hath forsaken me, and given me over to my self. It is too late to repent, too late to pray, too late to think of a new*

a new life; *all is too late*. This case is sad: But yet many of these are in a safer and better case then they imagine, and are but *frighted* by the tempter, and it is *not too late*, while they cry out; *It is too late*: But if you are left to cry in *hell* [*It is too late*] alas, how *long* and how *dolefull* a cry and lamentation will it be!

O consider poor sinner, that God knoweth the *Time* and *Season* of thy *mercyes*: He giveth thee *Spring* and *Harvest* in their *Season*: and all his mercies in their *Season*, and wilt thou not know *thy Time* and *Season*, for *love* and *duty* and *thanks* to him?

Consider that God who hath commanded thee thy work,

work, hath also appointed thee thy time: And this is his appointed time. To day therefore hearken to his voice, and see that thou harden not thy heart: He that bids thee *Repent and work out thy Salvation with fear and trembling*, doth also bid thee do it *Now*: *Obey* him in the *time*, if thou wilt be *indeed obedient*: He best understandeth the fittest time. One would think to men that have lost so much already, and loitered so long, and are so lamentably behind hand, and stand so near the bar of God, and their everlasting state, there should be no need to say any more, to perswade them to be up and doing. I shall add but this: *You are never like to*

have

have a better time. Take this or the work will grow more *difficult*, more *doubtful*, if through the just judgement of God, it become not *desperate*. If all this will not serve but still you will loiter till time be gone, what can your poor friends do but lament your misery! The Lord knows, if we knew what words, what pains, what cost would tend to your awakening and conversion and salvation, we should be glad to submit to it; and we hope we should not think our labours, or liberties or our lives too dear to promote so blessed and so necessary a work. But if when all is done that we can do, you will leave us nothing but our tears and

moans

groans for self destroyers, the sin is yours and the suffering shall be yours: If I can do no more, I shall leave this upon record, that *we seek your Time* to call you home, that SERIOUS DILIGENCE is necessary to your Salvation, and that *God* is the *Rewarder of them that diligently seek him*, Heb. 11, 6. and that *this* was your *day*, your *only day*: It must be NOW or NEVER.

FINIS.